



*The Journal*  
of  
**The Music Academy Madras**  
*Devoted to the Advancement of the Science and Art of Music*  
**Vol. 92 • 2023**

नाहं वसामि वैकुण्ठे न योगिहृदये रवौ ।  
मद्भक्तः यत्र गायन्ति तत्र तिष्ठामि नारद ॥

“I dwell not in Vaikunta, nor in the hearts of Yogins, not in  
the Sun; (but) where my Bhaktas sing, there be I, Narada !”

**Narada Bhakti Sutra**

Editor  
**Sriram V.**

**THE MUSIC ACADEMY MADRAS**

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Editor

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**THE MUSIC ACADEMY MADRAS**

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# Contents

Report on the Inauguration of the Music Academy's 96th Annual Conference and Concerts on December 15, 2022	1
Report on the daily sessions of the 96th Annual Conference	3
The Sadas	49
The 16th Annual Dance Festival	51
<b>Articles</b>	
Ananda Coomaraswamy: The Dance of Siva and its Influence in South East Asia	53
Śaṅgīta Kalānidhi T.M. Thyagarajan — A Centenary Tribute	63
Pallavi-s in Three of the 108 Tāḷa-s (Vilōkita, Pārvatilōcana and Miśra-varṇa)	72
Compositions of Subbaraya Sastry — An Analysis	76
Understanding 'Thāyam' from Thanjavur Manuscripts	88
Composer Anantha Bharathi and his Śrīmad Bhāgavata Daśama Skanda Kīrtanaikaḥ	97
Pallaki sēva prabandha of Sahaji Maharaja	113
Vīṇa Vidvān Brahmasri A. Ananthakrishna Iyer and his Compositions	125
Dr. Balantrapu Rajanikanta Rao's contribution to Dance, Literature and Music	137
Approaching Rakti Rāga-s through Varṇams	149
<b>Book Reviews</b>	
1. Nṛtta Ratnāvalī of Jaya Senapati	157
2. The Rāga of My Life (2002)	165
3. The Glorious Tradition of the Etawah-Imdad Khan Gharāna (2007)	165



## Editor's Note

And so, here we are, with yet another journal of the Music Academy, Madras. It has been an exciting year for us at the library/archives. Not only has our book collection increased, we have also seen increased footfalls at the library, with plenty of scholars coming here to research. A very fulfilling moment for us in 2022 was when after years of fruitless search at libraries elsewhere, our committee member Sujatha Vijayaraghavan found what is possibly the only surviving copy of Ananthabharathi compositions at our library itself. And thereby hangs an interesting story.

The book in question was part of Sangita Kalanidhi Embar Vijayaraghavachariar's personal collection which the Music Academy had acquired in the 1990s. Thereafter, the collection remained fairly untouched though thankfully preserved well. It is in the past one year that young Harikatha performer Krithika Bharadwaj has been taking a personal interest in the collection and these gems have begun tumbling out. We are happy that she will be presenting a talk on the Embar manuscripts in our collection in the forthcoming annual conference. And that is not all. We received an email from the Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai wanting to know if we had a copy of the nirupanam that Embar wrote for a Harikatha on Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi which he performed before the sage himself in the 1930s. Sure enough we had that too and happily shared a copy with them.

Our catalogue is on our website. We are continuing with our push for digitisation and now over 250 rare books, pertaining to the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries have been digitised.

The Music Academy TAG Archives is more or less done with its digitisation and archiving exercise. The old software had served its time and our collection is now moving on to cloud-based EnterMedia, the digital asset management platform. Our since thanks to The Hindu for lending its resource Suresh Vijayaraghavan who spearheaded the effort, with help from Savita Narasimhan and Harini Rangan.

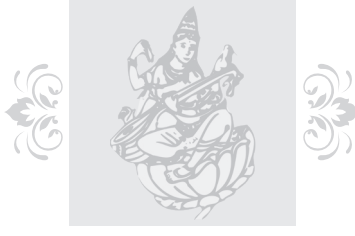
This volume of our Journal has reports of the 96<sup>th</sup> annual conference. The Journal reports have been put together by Lakshmi Anand who now writes frequently on music, Dr Aravind Ranganathan, a dentist with a passion for music research and Lashman who when not learning music, is researching on it. I thank them all for their efforts. In addition we have articles by scholars which I am sure will be of benefit to the music world at large. The Journal this year has more articles and songs with notation than before. A large part of the credit for co-ordinating this task goes to S Janaki, who after retiring from Sruti magazine

now helps out at the Music Academy. I thank the members of the Editorial Board for their advice. And of course, a huge thanks to the ever-smiling AS Diwakar and his team at Compuprint for bringing out the Journal on time.

We at the Music Academy would be happy to receive feedback on this Journal at [music@musicacademymadras.com](mailto:music@musicacademymadras.com)

I wish you all a happy and healthy 2024 and before that , a wonderful December participating in the 97<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference and Concerts of the Music Academy, Madras.

**Sriram V**  
Music Academy  
December 15, 2023



## **Report on the Inauguration of the Music Academy's 96th Annual Conference and Concerts on December 15, 2022**

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Thiru M.K. Stalin called upon music sabhas such as the Music Academy to give priority to Tamil music and songs in concerts. The Chief Minister was inaugurating the 96th annual conference and concerts of the Music Academy on 15th December 2022 at the T.T. Krishnamachari Auditorium of the Music Academy.

“Tamil literature is a treasure house of thousands of Tamil songs. They should be sung in music sabhas. Whether it is bhakti music or film music or light music or pop and rock music, it should be in Tamil; this is my desire,” he said, inaugurating the 96th annual conference and concerts of the Music Academy.

Thiru Stalin said art would survive only if the language survived. “Nurturing music will not only nurture art, but also the Tamil language. All sabhas and artistes should keep this in mind,” said the Chief Minister who also honoured the Music Academy’s Sangita Kalanidhi designates vocalist Neyveli R. Santhanagopalan (2020), mridangam artiste Thiruvaarur Bakthavathsalam (2021) and violinists Lalgudi G.J.R. Krishnan and his sister Lalgudi Vijayalakshmi.

Pointing out that Tamil music was ancient and rich and the Tamil literary work Silapathikaram was actually a musical epic, Thiru Stalin said the link between Tamil and music could be known by reading Tevaram, Tiruvachagam, Nalayira Divya Prabandham, Periya Puranam, and other works.

Recalling Music Academy president N. Murali’s speech that his organisation was promoting “unity in diversity” through music, the Chief Minister said the country needed the idea very much. “You should not think that the idea is confined only to political parties. It should be the idea of every individual and organisation,” he said.

He also placed on record his appreciation for the Music Academy, saying that it was no small task that it had sustained itself for 96 years. “You can start anything, but running

it successfully is not easy. It remains a Vedanthangal for music lovers from all over the world. It is the first function I have attended without any tension after assuming office as Chief Minister,” he added.

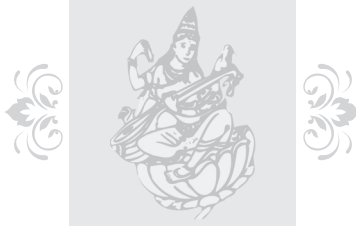
Industries Minister Thangam Thennarasu participated in the event. Secretary of the Academy V. Srikanth proposed a vote of thanks.

*Courtesy: The Hindu*

The text of the presidential addresses delivered by the four Sangita Kalanidhis at the inauguration of the 96th Annual Conference and Concerts are available in the Music Academy Souvenir 2022



The full recording of the inaugural function can be seen on the Music Academy's YouTube channel – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F-p36HIWVsQ>



## Report on the daily sessions of the 96th Annual Conference

**December 16, 2022**

### **Saṅgīta Kalānidhi TM Thyagarajan, a Centenary Tribute**

The first day's proceedings began with group singing by the students of the III year of the Advanced School of Carnatic Music. Sangita Kalanidhi designate Neyveli Santhanagopalan chaired the session.

Secretary of the Music Academy and Convenor of the Conference, Sriram V, welcomed the gathering. The first lecture of the conference was the birth centenary tribute presented by Saṅgīta Kalā Āchārya Dr Ritha Rajan.

The session began with a rendition of compositions reflecting the influence of Saṅgīta Kalānidhi TM Thyagarajan, by III year students of the Advanced School of Carnatic Music (ASCM) of the Music Academy.

A prime disciple of Saṅgīta Kalānidhi Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer (SSI), Sangita Kalanidhi TM Thyagarajan (TMT) was known for a particularly extensive repertoire and as a composer and tunesmith of excellence. Several senior performing musicians were his students. He was held in high esteem by musicians like Sangita Kalanidhi KV Narayanaswamy, Ramnad Krishnan, Sangita Kalanidhi ML Vasanthakumari and more, who sang compositions tuned by him.

A conscientious musician, he was unafraid of expressing what he thought was correct. He was an excellent administrator as well, joining the Central College of Carnatic Music in 1962 and becoming Principal in 1977.

His ancestors were naṭṭuvanār-s and musicians of Thanjavur who initially went to Baroda with Maharani Chimna Bai I as part of her dowry when she married Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaekwad III. As a child, he had danced Bharatanāṭyam in female attire. Later, he acted in dramas where he was known for his musical skills. He performed his first stage concert in



Thiruvaiyaru at age eight, accompanied by Pudukottai Dakshinamurthy Pillai on mṛdangam. So elated was Dakshinamurthy Pillai that he lifted the child and blessed him.

In 1941, at Thiruvaiyaru, SSI asked Thanjavur Vaidyanatha Iyer for a good śiṣya. Vaidyanatha Iyer suggested TMT who sang before SSI and was immediately absorbed. TMT went to Trivandrum with SSI who was then with the Swati Thirunal Academy. Since SSI was in the palace, it was mostly TMT who taught the students at the Academy. Very soon, TMT was providing vocal support for SSI. Within 2-3 years, TMT emerged as a full-fledged vidvan.

TMT handled common and uncommon rāga-s alike with great maturity, featuring beautiful stacked saṅgati-s that made full use of the rāga. He set excellent ciṭṭaswara-s for many pieces – these were underlaid on the laya inherent in dance, typical of the Thanjavur Quartet. Some lesser heard songs such as Pallavi Sesha Iyer's piece in Ūrmikā achieved a status akin to a main piece with his treatment.

His repertoire included common and uncommon pieces and traditional and contemporary composers. His compositions, mostly in Tamil, consisting of tāna varṇam-s, kīrtanai-s, rāgamālika-s and tillāna-s, reflect attention to lyrics and highlight the rāga-s' pivotal svāra-s. He popularised many pieces such as those of Thiruvārur Ramaswamy Pillai.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel – [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_yY2l2TPAi4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_yY2l2TPAi4)

**Lakshmi Anand**

**December 17, 2022**

**Setting Pallavi-s in Mísra Varṇa, Vilōkita and Pārvati Lōcana Tāḷa-s**

The second day's session began with group singing by the students of the I & II year of the Advanced School of Carnatic Music. Sangita Kalanidhi designate Neyveli Santhanagopalan chaired the session.

Saṅgīta Kalā Āchārya Dr RS Jayalakshmi presented the exploration of three tāḷa-s out of the 108 tāḷa-s, through pallavi-s. She was accompanied by her granddaughter and vainika, Charulatha Chandrasekar. Readers can read the essay written by the presenter herself, which is published elsewhere in the journal.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel – <https://youtu.be/xAb1rIdtGi8?si=4-C54T5U8DnNmDIU>

**Lashman**

## Understanding the form Ṭhāyam from Thanjavur Manuscripts

The second lecture of the day on the above topic was by musicologist Dr V Premalatha. The lecture gave an insight into a defunct musical form ‘Ṭhāyam’ available in the manuscripts preserved at Thanjavur Maharaja Serfoji’s Sarasvati Mahal Library (TMSSML). Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate Vidvān Neyveli Santhanagopalan presided over the session.

Ṭhāyam is a musical form popular during the 16th and 17th centuries. This form, along with ālāpa, gīta, and prabandha, constitutes the four pillars expounded in the treatise ‘Caturdaṇḍī Prakāśika’, the much-revered work of Venkatamakhi. Due to the efforts of Thanjavur Maharaja Serfoji, the musical forms/compositions available to him were preserved in palm leaf manuscripts. This presentation focused on the ṭhāyam-s available in the manuscripts with notations, which are around 250 in number. Though it is relatively easy to find musical works in manuscripts, it is rare to see them having notations, remarked the speaker. Hence, these available manuscripts are very valuable as they shed light on the musical forms rendered a few centuries ago.

After referring to the various research works done on this topic, Premalatha ventured into the structural and melodic aspects of ṭhāyam. As a musical form, ṭhāyam, is made of only svara phrases. Though few of them can have syllables like ‘tā’, ‘ā’, and ‘nam’ appended to the svara passages, the majority of them were sung simply as svara-s sans sāhitya. They were all set to a single rāga without tāḷa. A rāga can have more than one ṭhāyam, and in such cases, each ṭhāyam is unique in its melodic structure.

Ṭhāyam-s can be said to have two segments – a beginning section called ‘eḍuppu’ or ‘makariṇi’ and a concluding section named ‘muktāyi’. Strangely, none of the ṭhāyam-s notated in the manuscripts studied identify the section ‘eḍuppu’ or ‘makariṇi’, though the section ‘muktāyi’ can be seen.

Each ṭhāyam in a rāga has a unique distinctive phrase. Premalatha prefers to call this as ‘common ending phrase’. This phrase is repeated at least seven or eight times within a ṭhāyam and usually ends in ṣaḍja. When this phrase ends in a svara other than ṣaḍja like madhyama or niṣāda, the respective ṭhāyam-s are named madhyama sthāyi ṭhāyam or niṣāda sthāyi ṭhāyam. This phrase also denotes the end of a line within a ṭhāyam, said the speaker.

The manuscripts studied also mention the terms sārāṇi and pakka sārāṇi ṭhāyam-s. When a ṭhāyam has two segments, the first section is called sārāṇi ṭhāyam and the second one is called pakka sārāṇi ṭhāyam. A few other differences were also pointed out by the speaker. Sārāṇi ṭhāyam has ‘tānam’ syllables, and pakka sārāṇi ṭhāyam has mandara sthāyi sañcāra-s.

Premalatha then proceeded to explain the melodic aspect of ṭhāyam-s. The ṭhāyam-s begin with the ‘common ending phrase’. The svāra-s are added to this phrase. The svāra-s added are simple and succinct projecting the melodic aspect of a rāga. Contrastingly, the last line is much bigger with a lot of jāṇṭa phrases. Again, the ‘common ending phrase’ is used to complete the composition. The speaker also pointed out some of the ṭhāyam-s have many phrases in the avarōhaṇa krama and the rāga lakṣaṇa seen in these ṭhāyam-s correspond with the text ‘Rāga lakṣaṇamu’ of Saha Maharaja. These were demonstrated with suitable examples. The speaker concluded saying that the ṭhāyam-s serve as an important record to understand the music that prevailed over a few hundred years ago.

The lecture was followed by a discussion and the Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate vidvān Neyveli Santhanagopalan complimented the speaker.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy’s YouTube channel – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ksr0SpvuTHM&t=75s>

**Aravindh Ranganathan**

**December 18, 2022**

### **Saṅgīta Kalā Āchārya Kalpakam Swaminathan, a Centenary Tribute**

The third day's session began with the rendition of Muthuswami Dikshitar's Guruna Palitosmi by Sanjana Meenakshi & Shreya Ravikumar (II ASCM). Sangita Kalanidhi designate Neyveli Santhanagopalan chaired the session.

The first lecdem of the day was presented by viduṣi Dr. Y Bhagavathi.

The name of vaiṇika viduṣi Kalpakam Swaminathan is inextricably tied with the compositions of Muthuswami Dikshitar. Her tutelage under the musicians from Dikshitar's lineage, such as Ananthakrishna Iyer and Sangita Kalanidhi TL Venkatarama Iyer, complementing her highly sought-after and unique musical catalogue, earned her this distinctive reputation. She would perform comprehensive presentations of Dikshitar's Tyāgarāja vibhakti kṛti-s and Tiruvarur pañcaliṅga kṛti-s.

Born on 15 August 1922, Kalpakam was initiated into music by her mother Abhayambal, and grandmother Dharmambal, and was trained in vīṇa by Puna N Rajagopalan. She worked as a faculty member and a supporting musician at Kalakshetra, Madras, where she had the privilege of associating with musicians like Sangita Kalanidhi-s Mysore Vasudevachar and Budalur Krishnamurthy Sastrigal.

Over the years, Kalpakam became intimately associated with the vīṇa. With a penchant for styles that emphasised melody, sophistication of sound, and the aesthetics of understatement, she was drawn to the likes of Vīṇa Dhanammal, MA Kalyana Krishna Bhagavatar, and Sangita Kalanidhi KS Narayanaswamy, which in turn led to the creation of her unmistakable stylistic vocabulary.

Split-fingering technique, and pulling of multiple notes from a single fret, as opposed to the horizontal traversing of fret to achieve similar effect, were some of the definitive elements of her style. As a testament to her contemplation of the technique and its position in relation to other methods, style, and intent, Kalpakam's articulation, both musical and verbal, is succinct, and reflective of her own personality, on which her music itself was gracefully couched.

A chaste vaiṇika, an unpretentious traditionalist, a generous teacher, and an uncompromising aesthete, Kalpakam stood as a pivotal link between the music of the temple, and the music of the sabha.

Dr. Y Bhagavati's reminiscences of her guru Kalpakam Swaminathan, on the occasion of her birth centenary, aptly punctuated with the rendition of the latter's video resources, evoked in the listeners a profound sense of nostalgia and admiration for the late Vaiṇika Gāyikā.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel – <https://youtu.be/5MjLoxPxUGE?si=IBPX1DT-iKxFYXy->

**Lashman**

## Compositions of some Nāgasvaram and Taval exponents

Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate vidvān Neyveli Santhanagopalan in the chair presided over the second lecture of the day. The topic of the day was presented by vidvān Injikkudī Mariyappan. The lecture shed light on valuable contributions made by nāgasvaram and taval exponents of yesteryear.

The presenter began the programme with the works of renowned nāgasvaram vidvān Dharmapuram Govindaraja Pillai. After giving introductory remarks about the composer, he began the session by singing a varṇam Pārāyō Śrī Vallī Dēvasēnāpati, in rāga Sumanēsarāñjanī' composed by Govindaraja Pillai. The unique feature of this varṇam is the rhythmic challenge that it imposes on the singer. The last svara segment that comes after the carāṇam is to be sung in five naḍai-s namely tiśra, catuśra, khaṇḍa, miśra, and saṅkīrṇa, which was ably demonstrated by Mariyappan.

Govindaraja Pillai has not only employed such rhythmical intricacies in his compositions. He has also utilized some rāga-s like Indirai, Kṛṣṇavēṇī, and Śrījai for his compositions and proved his mastery over laya by composing in rare tāla-s like tiśra Jhampa. Mariyappan demonstrated the intricacies mentioned above by rendering a composition in the rāga Vandanaḍhāriṇī set to tāla tiśra Jhampa.

The varṇam-s composed by Govindaraja Pillai, around 30 in number, are available as a book titled Abhirāmi Isai Varṇa Mālai, and the composer deserves to be credited for being the first to dedicate an entire book for Tamil varṇa-s, remarked Mariyappan. He used 'sundara' as his mudra, in memory of his father Abhiramasundaram Pillai. Beside varṇam-s he has also composed around 30 kīrtana-s, said the speaker.

Mariyappan presented two of the kīrtana-s Arulpuri Vēlā and Tāmadamēn svāmi in the rāga-s Kīravāṇī and Svarṇāṅgī respectively. Pillai's command over the language was evident in the kṛti in Kīravāṇī. He has used all the vowels available in Tamil in the kīrtana.

The speaker then proceeded to mention the contributions made by the second composer of the day Porayar Venugopala Pillai. This taval exponent learned the art from great teachers like Tiruvalaputtur Pasupati Pillai, Tirukkadaiyur Cinniah Pillai, and Koorainadu Pakkiri Pillai. Being an eminent taval vidvān, he has composed several kīrtana-s, mallāri, and pallavi-s. His significant contribution to the field of music is the modification made by him in the structural design of the taval. He was the first one to introduce iron 'vār' or iron belts in taval. This remarkable innovation gives him a unique place among the taval vidvān-s.

Mariyappan presented three compositions of this composer – a mallāri in the rāga Gambhīranāṭa, and two kṛti-s in the rāga-s Ānandabhairavī and Sāvitrī'. Whereas the kṛti in rāga Sāvitrī was structured more like a light classical, the Ānandabhairavī kīrtana had a liberal usage of its anya svara-s antara gāndhāra and kākali niṣāda.

Mariyappan moved on to the third composer Koorainadu Natesa Pillai. Belonging to the lineage of Muthusvami Dikshitar through his father Ramasvamy Pillai, a direct disciple of the latter, he was an expert in both Bharatam and Nāgasvaram. He started to learn the nuances of music and dance from his father at the age of three and became a great Bharatam artiste at 19 years of age. His repertoire was extensive consisting of thousands of varṇam-s and kīrtana-s, said the speaker.

He started to learn nāgasvaram when he was around 30 years of age from vidvān-s Terezhundur Subrahmanya Pillai, Kottai Subrahmanya Pillai and Injikkudi Kumara Pillai. He has 116 tāna varṇam-s and kīrtana-s to his credit. Almost all of his compositions are in Telugu and were composed on Parimala Ranganathar enshrined in Thiruindalur, a divya dēśam located close to his birthplace Koorainadu. Mariyappan rendered the varṇam ‘Adi nīpai’ in the rāga Jyōtisvarūpiṇi featuring his mudra ‘sindhupuri’. He trained several disciples and the notable ones include vidvān-s Chidambaram Vaidyanatha Pillai and Injikkudi Pitchakannu Pillai.

The last composer dealt with in the lecture was Kannusamy Pillai. Though he is projected as a taval vidvān, he was equally adept in playing nāgasvaram, mṛdaṅgam, and kanjīrā. Eminent vidvān-s like Tiruvalaputtur Pasupati Pillai and Tirumullaivasal Muthuvira Pillai learnt taval from him. Well known nāgasvara vidvān-s Vaziyur Virasamy Pillai and TN Rajaratnam Pillai were his disciples. He has not used any insignia in his compositions. Mariyappan concluded his presentation by rendering a tillāna composed by Kannusamy Pillai in the rāga Vasantā.

The lecture was well-received and much appreciated. Dr. Rama Kausalya, an Expert Committee member remarked that the phrase ‘pdnpdp’ in the Ānandabhairavī rāga varṇam interfused well with the composition showing the prowess of the composer. Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate Neyveli Santhanagopalan complimented the speaker for his efforts in bringing out these rare compositions.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel – [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5FSjLyeIE\\_w&mp;=6904s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5FSjLyeIE_w&mp;=6904s)

**Aravindh Ranganathan**



**December 19, 2022**

### **Jayamaṅgala Tāḷa, A Rhythmic Exposition**

The 4th day's session began with the rendition of Tyagaraja's Sogasugamridanga talamu in raga Sriranjani by Visaka (I ASCM). Sangita Kalanidhi designate Neyveli Santhanagopalan chaired the session.

Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate vidvān Thiruvaarur Bakthavathsalam selected Jayamaṅgala tāḷa for a rhythmic exploration, along with his students, Delhi Sairam and Sumesh Narayanan. He was provided melodic support by vidvān-s Rajkumar Bharathi and Thiruvavarur Girish.

The tāḷa (and the rāga) for the presentation was chosen in order to pay tribute to the Music Academy's 96<sup>th</sup> annual music festival. Since there are no tāḷa-s with 96 akṣhara-s, Jayamaṅgala tāḷa, which has 48 akṣhara-s was decided on for exposition, because rendering the tāḷa twice results in a beat count of 96. Vidvān Rajkumar Bharathi had composed a raga — Jayamaṅgalam, in honour of this special occasion, and had crafted a pallavi in the same rāga. The rāga is a derivate of the 24<sup>th</sup> (again, four times 24 yields 96) Mela — Varuṇapriyā, with the scale: s r2 m1 p d3 n3 S / S n3 d3 p m1 g2 r2 s.

Jayamaṅgala tāḷa features an evenly repetitive structure of 1 laghu, 1 guru, 1 plutam, followed by 1 laghu, 1 guru, 1 plutam. The rhythmic exposition in the form of a tani āvartanam, by the trio of mṛdangam artistes, was skilfully executed and garnered immense appreciation from the audience.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel – [https://youtu.be/PzAzRjPn6Bs?si=\\_VC7k2CErfUVzvsY](https://youtu.be/PzAzRjPn6Bs?si=_VC7k2CErfUVzvsY)

**Lashman**

## Saṅgīta Kalā Āchārya Nukala Chinna Satyanarayana, a Centenary Tribute

The second presentation of the day was by vidvān TP Chakrapani. The lecture demonstration commenced with the rendition of Śrīnivāsa varadāyaka, a composition of vidvān Nukala Chinna Satyanarayana, in the rāga Nāṭṭakurinji. This was composed by him within minutes, on his way from Tirupati to Tirumala; a remarkable musical outburst. This kind of spontaneity was a hallmark of his artistry.

He has set to tune many compositions with the same spontaneity and his creative spark was stimulated by inspirations from all around him. For instance, when he listened to a Hindustani musician's rendition of rāga Kalāvati, he channeled his inspiration by setting Annamacharya's Devadevam bhajé to the same rāga.

He was responsible for shifting the cultural focus to Hyderabad, when Vijayawada was still reigning as the cultural capital of the Telugu state. He organized mass classes, which were attended by around 400 students, where anyone was welcome to partake in his musicality. He played a pivotal role in inviting various musicians to perform in Hyderabad.

TP Chakrapani's presentation, replete with anecdotes about his guru, offered a captivating peek into the musicianship and personality of Nukala Chinna Satyanarayana Garu.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel – [https://youtu.be/RC9\\_sV-spmM?si=LH2dI9IXw68t4xGG](https://youtu.be/RC9_sV-spmM?si=LH2dI9IXw68t4xGG)

**Lashman**

## December 20, 2022

### Stillness in Dance

The 5th day's session began with a rendition of Nilakanta Sivan's Anandanatamaduvār in raga Purvikalyāṇi by Sowmiya (II ASCM). Sangita Kalanidhi designate Neyveli Santhanagopalan presided over the session.

The first lecdem of the day was presented by Nritya Kalanidhi designate Rama Vaidyanathan.

"It is far more difficult to preserve one's integrity in stillness than in action," remarked Martha Graham while discussing the hardest thing to do in dance — standing still.

Rama Vaidyanathan's lecture demonstration delved into the concept of stillness in movement. The dance that is overly saturated with movements and motions and gesture can be overwhelming. The pauses, the silences and the stillness cushioned on both sides by movement, allows essential moments of repose to let the dance sink in.

'Aḍaṅgāda ennai', a verse by Tirumular was sung in rāga Śyāmkalyāṇi, where Rama illustrated the analogy of the restless mind to the fluttering kite in the sky. It is that moment, when the kite, after all its motion, attains that equilibrium in the air, which is the perfect metaphor for the mind achieving stillness after all that movement. In essence, body dances, but mind meditates.

Following this was an excerpt from the Pūrvikalyāṇi varṇam, 'Tāmadam seiyaḷāgumo'. An impatient nāyikā awaits her paramour and there is a profound disequilibrium between her internal clock and the external time. The dancer embodying her is met with the challenge of portraying anticipation. Here, stillness is more of a non-negotiable demand, than an embellishment.

Finally, Rama presented a regular aḍavu sequence, except with a remarkable slowdown. The same aḍavu that typically takes a few seconds to execute, is now thrown under the microscope with this slowness. When done this way, the dancer needs to confront stillness head-on, but this is how one "makes friends with an aḍavu". It is arduous, but it is addictive, feels Rama.

Dance needs to de-clutter to communicate better. There is no other way, a performance, which is packed with dance gets internalised. The pause in dance lures the onlooker into its realm. The power of stillness in dance is comparable only to the silence in music. Though seemingly paradoxical, it is through achieving this harmony, that dance transcends into Dance.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel – [https://youtu.be/XQdvzL\\_rjfY?si=HBr5Bw8KwwfEh\\_0S](https://youtu.be/XQdvzL_rjfY?si=HBr5Bw8KwwfEh_0S)

**Lashman**

## The Compositions of Kallidaikurichi A. Ananthakrishna Iyer

Viduṣi Revathi Sadasivam, supported by vidvān Vivek Sadasivam, presented the second lecture of the day. They gave an elaborate talk about the life and contributions of Kallidaikurichi Ananthakrishna Iyer. Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate vidvān Neyveli Santhanagopalan chaired the session.

Revathi divided the session into three segments – the first one dealing with the life and musical career of Ananthakrishna Iyer, the second one with the books authored by him and his role in the propagation of the kṛti-s of Muthusvami Dikshitar, and the last one on the compositions composed by him.

Ananthakrishna Iyer was born to Anantharaman and Champakavalli in 1899 in Tirunelveli district. As he belonged to a Brahmin family, he was proficient in Vēda-s and Upaniṣad-s. He was a polyglot and adept in Sanskrit, Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu. He was also a Śrī Vidyā upāsaka and jyotiṣa śāstra nipuṇa. At sixteen years of age, an accidental meeting with Ammaḷu Ammal brought a change in his life. She was the eldest daughter of Ambi Dikshitar, son of the ever-famous Subbarama Dikshitar, a grand nephew of Muthusvami Dikshitar. Having seen the sincerity in Ananthakrishna, Ammaḷu Ammal took him to Ettayapuram and made him a disciple of her father. Thus, he became the disciple of the illustrious Dikshitar lineage, thereby indelibly etching his name in the pages of Carnatic music.

The necessity to propagate the music of Muthusvami Dikshitar made the guru-śiṣya move to Madras. During 1922, Ambi Dikshitar established a music school by the name Dikshita Sangita Kalasalai and many renowned musicians like Sangita Kala Acharya S Rajam, Sangita Kalanidhi DK Pattammal, and Sangita Kalanidhi TL Venkatarama Iyer learned from him. The gurukulavāsa with Ambi Dikshitar gave Ananthakrishna, an opportunity to learn several kṛti-s of Muthusvami Dikshitar along with the compositions of other vāggēyakāra-s. This practice culminated in the publication of two books along with another eminent musician and Harikathā exponent Sangita Kalanidhi Vedanta Bhagavata. The Kamalamba Navāvaraṇa kṛti-s and the Navagraha kṛti-s were published by them under the auspices of Ambi Dikshitar. Ananthakrishna started the music school Karnāṭaka Vainika Gana Vidyalaya along with his brother Kallidaikurichi Sundaram Iyer in 1934 and authored several books starting from the basic lessons to advanced kṛti-s. Later, Ananthakrishna moved to Calcutta and started a music school Guruguha Gana Vidyalaya to propagate our music in the eastern part of the country. The grandsons and granddaughters of Ananthakrishna Iyer carry on the legacy.

Ananthakrishna Iyer has several compositions to his credit. His compositions are in Sanskrit, Tamil, and Telugu. He has used ‘Guruguhadāsa’ as his mudrā, though few of his

compositions are without this mudrā. A varṇam in the rāga Kharaharapriyā was presented by Vivek. This was composed on Devi Kali enshrined in Calcutta.

The lyrical style of Ananthakrishna Iyer is more close to that of Muthusvami Dikshitar, especially those composed in Sanskrit. Many of them have a ciṭṭasvara, madhyama kāla sāhitya, rāga mudrā, sthala mudrā, and intricate details about the deity/sthala. The kṛti Śītalāmbām in the rāga Vasantā and the kṛti Ekāmbreśam in the rāga Tōḍī can be cited as examples. The former was composed on Sitala Devi of Kasi and the latter was composed on Siva enshrined in Siddhanallur. Both were sung by Vivek.

Subrahmanya Svamy was the īsta daiva of Ananthakrishna Iyer and a Tamil kṛti composed by him in the rāga Khamās was presented by Vivek. The lecture also included a musical rendition of a rāgamālika composed on Paśupatiśvara of Nepal. The talk concluded with the rendition of the kṛti Śivagurunāthanai, actually composed by Ettapa Maharaja (in the rāga Mukhāri and notated in Saṅgīta Sampradāya Pradarśini), but tuned to the rāga Sindhubhairavī by Ananthakrishna Iyer.

The lecture was followed by a discussion. Dr Rīta Rājan, a member of the Experts Committee asked the speaker about the use of the rāga Kharaharapriyā by Ananthakrishna Iyer. She raised the question as this rāga was not used by the Dikshitar school, to which Ananthakrishna Iyer belonged. Revathi Sadasivam replied that the composer did not restrict himself to the rāga-s prevalent in his lineage. This was followed by a question by Dr Sumithra Vasudev on the mudrā used by Ananthakrishna Iyer. She remarked that the mudra ‘Guruguhadāsa’ is not used in the varṇam and wanted to know whether or not he had used any mudrā other than the mentioned one. Revathi responded that the composer had composed a few compositions without a specific mudrā. Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate vidvān Neyveli Santhanagopalan complimented the speaker and added that the mudrā used by Ananthakrishna Iyer was very similar to that of Thanjavur Ponnayya, a direct disciple of Muthusvami Dikshitar.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hyeUw1bGq5E&t=2462s>

**Aravindh Ranganathan**

**December 21, 2022**

### **Approaching Rakti Rāga-s through Varṇam-s**

The 6th day's session began with a rendition of Tyagaraja's Ragaratnamalikache in raga Ritigaula by Sreeraga & Srilakshmi (I ASCM). Sangita Kalanidhi designate Tiruvaarur Bakthavatsalam presided over the session.

In the first lecture demonstration of the day, viduṣi Sriranjani Santhanagopalan dealt with the timeless varṇam-s in rakti rāga-s, illustrating how they portray a vivid exposition of the rāga. Readers can read the essay written by the presenter herself, which is published elsewhere in the journal.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel – [https://youtu.be/uo\\_Z4gisEPs?si=VC81Fb26KUEigALe](https://youtu.be/uo_Z4gisEPs?si=VC81Fb26KUEigALe)

**Lashman**

## Subbaraya Sastri's Compositions, an analysis

In the second lecdem of the day, Saṅgīta Kalā Āchārya Rama Ravi and her daughter viduṣi Dr. Nandita Ravi presented an analysis of Subbaraya Sastri's compositions.

Subbaraya Sastri was the son of Syama Sastri. His ancestors were from Kambam region in Kurnool district in Andhra Pradesh and later moved to Kanchipuram – where Adi Sankara appointed his ancestors as temple arcaka-s.

Political trouble made them take the Bangaru Kamakshi deity to Tiruvarur in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Later, Syama Sastri's grandfather moved to Thanjavur to protect the idol. Syama Sastri was above want because his father had been gifted many estates by the ruler. Subbaraya Sastri, born in 1803, was the second son of Syama Sastri.

Subbaraya Sastri mastered Tamil, Telugu, Sanskrit and music. He was trained in music by both Syama Sastri and Tyagaraja. In Thanjavur, he came in contact with many Maratha musicians. He was supposedly an expert in violin and sariṇḍa.

He composed only about 12-13 compositions, mostly kṛti-s, all in Telugu, simple and lucid, portraying karuṇa rasa, asking the Goddess to shower her compassion on him. Similarities can be noted between Syama Sastri's and Subbaraya Sastri's compositions in the sentiments expressed.

Barring two compositions, all of Subbaraya Sastri's pieces are in praise of Devi. The melodies are highly nuanced and require advanced knowledge. He has not used any apūrva rāga-s in his compositions.

While Syama Sastri appears to have been especially fond of Ānandabhairavī, Subbaraya Sastri has not composed in that rāga at all. He has also stuck to ordinary rhythmic patterns in Ādi, Rūpakam and Miśra Cāpu tāla-s.

Subbaraya Sastri's kṛti-s are sophisticated, reflecting different types of gamaka-s, particularly in cauka kāla kṛti-s. Having learned from two of the music trinity, his pieces reflect the influence of the trinity, particularly in the many decorative āṅga-s such as svara sāhitya (like Syama Sastri), saṅgati-s (like Tyagaraja) and madhyama kāla (like Muthusvami Dikshitar). Most of his songs reflect svara sāhitya as in svaram after the anupallavi and sāhitya after the caraṇam.

Tyagaraja-style graded saṅgati-s can be seen in songs like Mīna nayana in Darbār that is reminiscent of Yōcana kamalālōcana. Rama Ravi mentioned Śāṅkari nīve as well which, she said, reminded one of Nī pāda paṅkaja mula.



Subbaraya Sastri's mudrā was 'Kumāra'. In many songs, he also provided a kṣhetra mudrā. It is reported that he performed the araṅgeṭram of Ninnu vina, a song dedicated to Goddess Dharmasamvardhini in Thiruvaiyaru, in front of Tyagaraja, who praised the composition.

Though not nearly to the same extent as Muthusvami Dikshitar, Subbaraya Sastri too travelled and composed on kṣhetra-s he visited in his travels. His composition on Tirupati, Venkaṭaśaila vihāra in Hamīrkalyāṇī, shows that he was influenced by Hindustani music. The word 'vihāra' ends in the upper ṣaḍja, seemingly to indicate the top of the mountain!

In the comments after the session, Dr Ritha Rajan indicated that there were two śiṣya paramparā-s associated with Subbaraya Sastri – Vīṇa Dhanammal's and Kanchipuram Dhanakoti Ammal's.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gSLnapaSpw>

**Lakshmi Anand**

**22 December, 2022**

### **Saṅgīta Kalānidhi KV Narayanaswamy, a Centenary Tribute**

The 7th day's session began with the rendition of Iraviamman Tampi's Karunai Cheyvan in Sriraga by Pavanetra (I ASCM). Sangita Kalanidhi designate Tiruvaarur Bakthavatsalam presided over the session.

Vidvān HV Srivatsan's centenary tribute to his guru, KV Narayanaswamy, affectionately known as KVN, titled "The Uncompromising Music of KVN", was firmly rooted in a single-worded compliment that Sangita Kalanidhi Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar bestowed upon KVN's music — "uṇmaiyanadu" (that which is truthful).

Be it his unwavering fidelity to pitch, vocal production, performance style, or attitude towards tradition, every aspect of KVN's music could be encapsulated in that one pregnant epithet — uṇmaiyanadu.

Born as Ramanarayanan in Palghat in 1923, into a Kollengode musical family, KVN received his initial music training from his grandparents and parents. He also later trained under Sangita Kalanidhi Palghat Mani Iyer, CS Krishna Iyer and Sangita Kalanidhi Papa Venkataramiah, before finally coming under the wings of Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar.

Srivatsan segmented his presentation in three facets — technical, artistic, and aesthetic, the values that comprise "Sampradāya Saṅgītam", and a fusion of which results in an elevated spiritual experience.

KVN's pitch perfection, purity of sound (open, relaxed, even and elastic), enunciation, and adherence to rhythm, are but a few aspects of his technical mastery, which still serve as sources of inspiration for artistes of all generations.

Beyond the technical, there is artistic. However, this subversion does not undermine the indispensability of the technical principles. A fine, fail-proof concert plan anchored KVN's iconic performances. His concerts were highly proportionate, featuring compositions he had invested in substantially, with a balanced and elevated approach to manodharma. Irrespective of where he performed, he could fill the entire space with nāda, leaving the audience in profound silence after the performance, with only his lingering sound in their minds.

Though KVN was an ardent stickler for technicality, and a champion of artistry, he is recognized among connoisseurs worldwide for the emotional quotient in his music. Think

of Varugalāmō, think of KVN. Think of Kṛṣṇa nī begané, think of KVN. The fact that his name was synonymous with several such compositions is in a way an achievement that not every artiste can claim.

HV Srivatsan's presentation, recognized as the best lecture of the 96th Annual Music Conference and Concerts series, was as refined as KVN's music itself. It served as a poignant reaffirmation of the eternal relevance and significance of KVN's music.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel – [https://youtu.be/UiNeInuCduI?si=SC7im82LU\\_vqk3BU](https://youtu.be/UiNeInuCduI?si=SC7im82LU_vqk3BU)

**Lashman**

**23 December, 2022**

### **Unfamiliar in the Familiar, Insights Sharp and the Subtle**

The 8th day's session began with Tiruppugazh by Purva Dhanashree (II ASCM). Sangita Kalanidhi designate Tiruvaarur Bakthavatsalam presided over the session.

The first lecdem of the day was presented by Nritya Kalānidhi designate viduṣi Bragha Bessell.

The traditional masters of Bharatanāṭyam possessed only a handful of compositions in their repertoire, which they performed repeatedly. Their goal was not to broaden their repertoire but to delve deeper. As they evolved, so did their perspective on these pieces. The longer they dedicated to these compositions, rather than being disinterested, they uncovered previously unnoticed aspects within these well-trodden narratives. This concept served as the foundation for Bragha Bessell's presentation on the 'Unfamiliar in the Familiar, Insights Sharp and Subtle'.

Looking beyond the surface, and reading between the lines, is truly the only way to comprehend a padam — the cornerstone of abhinaya. But this approach also applies to a seemingly simple verse like 'Mūṣika vāhana mōdaka hasta'. Bragha Bessell's exploration of the navarasa-s in the Ganapati śloka is a testament to the artiste's potential to unveil layers that elude the spectator.

However, this skill shines most prominently when performing a 'padam'. The text of a padam is sacrosanct, revealing everything about the characters, the situation, and the context. For example, the text of Nēṭrandi nēratilē is enough to convey that it's heroine is coy yet confrontational, shattered yet sensible. But it is the music of the padam that breathes life into these characters. The same lyrics, set to different melodies, can portray vastly distinct facets of the character. Bragha presented Kshetravayya's Eṭuvāṇṭi vāḍevvāḍu in Kalyāṇī rāga set to Mīśra Cāpu tāḷa, and also in Nīlāmbari rāga set to Tīśra Tṛpuṭa. In Kalyāṇī, the nāyikā seems youthful, expressive, and an extrovert, while in Nīlāmbari she exudes maturity, demureness, restraint, and poise. The shift from one rāga to another created a profound difference in the overall experience.

Kshetravayya is still the undisputed master among padakartā-s. There is an unhurried blossoming of the theme in his poems — from the pallavi, to the anupallavi, to the subsequent carāṇams, and attaining a crescendo in the final carāṇam. Occasionally, though, in this organic progression, an unexpected twist introduces additional layers to the character, as seen in Indendu vaccitivirā. This underscores the importance of learning the complete piece, regardless of how much one intends to perform.

Advanced learning necessitates exploring compositions through the various archetypes of heroines such as Mugdhā, Madhya, Pragalbhā, and more. In a vivid rendition of Nanné peṇḍlāḍusumī, where the nāyika proposes to Kṛṣṇa and assures him that her parents won't demand a dowry, Bragha's exploration of this theme through the aforementioned archetypes served as a fine example.

By delving into the unfamiliar aspects within the familiar, Bragha enabled her audience to witness the unseen within the seen, much to their delight.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel – <https://youtu.be/AwvhoHCYnKk?si=qKjvW6W3j6YDZXxR>

**Lashman**

## The Musical Facets of Tiruppugazh

The second lecture demonstration of the day was presented by Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate vidvān Neyveli Santhanagopalan.

Composed by Arunagirinathar (14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century), the Tiruppugazh is a highly respected form of composition. Arunagirinathar, also called “Chandapavaḷamaṇi”, is said to have composed over 16,000 Tiruppugazh of which 1,367 have reached us. Additionally, he also composed Kandaralkāram, Kandanubhūti, Kandarantādi, Tiruvaguppu, Vél viruttam, Mayil viruttam, Céval viruttam, and Tiru ezhukūtruirukkai.

His role model was Tirugnanasambandar – in many pieces Arunagirinathar says he wants to sing like Tirugnanasambandar.

The existence of Tiruppugazh was revealed to us through VT Subramania Pillai.

Several other individuals were also instrumental in taking Pillai’s efforts forward and further spreading and propagating Tiruppugazh. These included Vallimalai Swami, Tirumuruga Kripananda Variyar, Madurai Tiruppugazh Swami Iyer, Velur TA Sambandamoorthy, AS Raghavan, Sadhuram Swamigal and TM Krishnaswami Iyer.

Persons like PK Rajagopala Iyer, Sangita Kala Acharya TS Parthasarathy, Sangita Kalanidhi Trichy Sankaran and others have written about Tiruppugazh related aspects in the Music Academy’s Journal.

The lyrics of the Tiruppugazh indicate Arunagirinathar’s extensive knowledge of tāḷa-s, rāga-s and vādyam-s – however, the tunes that he might have set these verses to have not reached us.

Most Tiruppugazh verses are in Maṇipravalam, a mix of languages, often Tamil and Sanskrit. The innumerable patterns in Tiruppugazh are mind-boggling. There is evidence that patterns brought forth tāḷa and not vice versa.

The verses are characterised by chandam and tongal. Newer words were also used whenever it met requirements of metre. Extended sāhitya at the end of each verse is called a tongal. In most verses, the tongal is rhythmically different from the rest of the verse, though the rhythmic patterns of the tongal itself in the composition stays the same. The tongal also indicates transition from one verse to another within a Tiruppugazh. The tongal is what makes the chandam itself stand out.

When singing aloud a Tiruppugazh, some changes to metre could occur. There is a school that feels the chandam of a Tiruppugazh must not be deviated from, come what may;

however, Santhanagopalan said that in the interests of musical progress, one should not be so closed-minded. Rather, one should be aware of the original, how it has been changed and be prepared to explain it.

Alathur Brothers have sung Tiruppugazh with saṅgati-s. ‘Todi’ Kannan set some 40 Tiruppugazh to pallavi, anupallavi and caraṇam format. Many have used the compositions of the Trinity as inspiration for tuning Tiruppugazh. Santhanagopalan suggested that Tiruppugazh, if introduced to children, could enhance better enunciation.

Dr. Rama Kausalya added that Vadakupattu Matha Subramania Pillai did yeoman service in locating, researching and repairing palm leaf manuscripts of Tiruppugazh from all over.

V. Sriram mentioned that Appar’s Kuzhithalai Tevaram refers to ‘āryamtamizhoḍa iśaiānavan’, perhaps explaining the use of Maniṇṇavalam. He added that just as Tevaram’s origin is Chidambaram, there is a version that states that Subramania Pillai first became aware of Tevaram through a court case that mentioned a Tiruppugazh. It was also interesting, said Sriram, how of the 226 pāḍalpeṭra sthalaṁ in Tevaram, 117 have a Tiruppugazh too.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy’s  
YouTube channel – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6D-pU9zGY98>

**Lakshmi Anand**

**24 December, 2022**

### **Compositions of Sahaji's Pallaki sēva prabandha**

The 9th day's session began with the rendition of Muthuswami Dikshitar's Tyagaraja Palayasumam in raga Gaula by Baanupriya (II ASCM). Sangita Kalanidhi designate Tiruvaarur Bakthavatsalam presided over the session.

This lecture demonstration was presented by viduṣi Dr. Sumithra Vasudev and students of the Advanced School of Carnatic Music (ASCM) of the Music Academy.

Pallaki sēva prabandha is a magnus opus composed by Sahaji (r.1684-1712), the Maratha ruler of Tanjore and an ardent devotee of Tyagesa of Tiruvarur. Filled with daru-s, padyam-s, gadyam-s, vacana-s and chūrṇika-s, replete with metric and musical charm, and taking the audience to a literary dreamland, the (Gaurīśaṅkara) Pallakisēvaprabandha is an ideal example of a Gēya Nāṭaka, revolving around the principal characters — Tyagesa and Parvati.

The prabandha commences with Parvati's friends attempting to convey a message to the Lord about her distress borne out of separation from him. Koluvaivunnāḍē dēvadēvuḍu. He is preoccupied holding court, and approaching Him seems impossible due to the ever-rising crowds. To overcome this challenge, they consider seeking the help of a messenger. But who will be the messenger?

This is where Sahaji radiates his scholarship in language, literature and poetics. The friends contemplate whether Ganga, who resides amidst Siva's legendary locks, could be approached, but they quickly dismiss the idea. To them, Ganga represents everything that Parvati is not. Ganga's history of marrying King Santanu and then leaving him to reside with Siva adds to their hesitation. They note that Ganga can be fierce, even to the point of destroying villages on her shores.

Could the deer held by Siva be the messenger? Vinnavimavē mā cinnimrgamā. But what qualities of an ideal messenger does a deer possess? None, obviously. How about the serpent that adorns the Lord's body? Telupavaiyā mā manavi. But the serpent is famously two tongued (read: dishonest and untrustworthy). The crescent moon that Siva gave refuge to on his locks seems like the perfect choice. He is after all the brother of Lakshmi. He would treat Parvati alike. But upon his irresponsiveness, they conclude that he is, indeed, the brother also of the Halahala venom, and the maternal uncle of the cruel Manmatha. No wonder he resembles them in tendencies.

After much contemplation and hesitation, they decide to approach the Lord Tyagesa



themselves. “O Dīnamandāra”, they address the Lord and convey the state of Parvati and her desire to be with him at the moment. The Lord promptly agrees and sets off in his ‘pallaki’.

This is where the compositions start to mirror the temple traditions, with the Lord leaving in his palanquin to the chambers of the Goddess at night. Sahaji, being a devoted follower of Tyagesa, likely drew inspiration directly from the temple tradition and depicted it with an artist’s vision.

Tyagesa and Parvati unite, savour the delicacies prepared for them (Aragimpavayya), and cherish each other’s company, and that’s how the opera draws to a close.

Is Pallakisēvaprabandha a melodic, metric, literary masterpiece? Is it the king’s devotional offering to the temple of Tiruvarur? Is it a compilation of romantic sonnets? Or is it a testament to continuity and sustenance in art? The answer is yes, and more.

Dr. Sumithra Vasudev and the students of the Music Academy’s Advanced School of Carnatic Music enthralled the listeners by rendering the enchanting compositions of Sahaji in perfect unison, taking them on a virtual journey to the grand temple at Tiruvarur.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy’s  
YouTube channel – <https://youtu.be/x4NSieV2Z7k?si=MqAzsFqp8h6yq0ed>

**Lashman**

**25 December, 2022**

**Anantha Bharatiyin Śrī Bhāgavata Kīrtanaikaḷ, Daśama Skandam**

The 10th day's session began with a rendition of Koteeswara Iyer's Varanamukhava in Hamsadhwani by Uttara (I ASCM). Sangita Kalanidhi designates Lalgudi GJR Krishnan and Vijayalakshmi chaired the session.

In the first lecdem of the day, viduṣi Sujatha Vijayaraghavan presented an exploration of the Śrī Bhāgavata Kīrtanaikaḷ, focusing specifically on the Daśama Skandam, composed by Anantha Bharathi. A copy of the work, after an extensive and unsuccessful quest, was found to be available in the library of the Madras Music Academy. The tunes of the compositions being lost, some have been reset to music by vidvan RK Shriramkumar.

The compositions were rendered by viduṣi Amrita Murali, accompanied by Madan Mohan on the violin, S Kavichelvan on the mṛdangam and Shakti Muralidharan on the tambura.

Readers can read the essay written by the presenter herself, which is published elsewhere in the journal.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel – <https://youtu.be/KL30T1RYm04?si=KrDcxLqmNpFHL4ug>

**Lashman**

## The compositions of Kavi Kunjara Bharathi

The second lecdem of the day was presented by viduṣi Dr. Rama Kausalya, assisted by Madhuvanti Badri.

Kavi Kunjara Bharathi (1810-1896) was born at a time of renaissance for Tamil music – he was important amongst the many who composed Tamil pieces at that time. His family, though originally from Tirunelveli, had made Ramanathapuram their home.

Kavi Kunjara Bharathi's given name was Koteeswara Bharathi, as he was named after his grandfather. It was believed he was a gift of Lord Muruga since he was born after his parents had propitiated Kodumalur Subramania Swamy for a child. Both sides of the family were very talented and it could thus be said he had vidvat in his blood. At age 12, he had mastered Tamil and Sanskrit and had begun composing. His intellectual companion then was Madhurakavi Bharathi.

At 18, he was afflicted with an unknown disease. He had a dream wherein the presiding deity of the local temple told him to compose on that God. He thus composed a paḷḷu, a popular form of composition then, and was immediately completely cured. That paḷḷu was later also staged as a play.

Sivaganga's Gowri Vallabha Maharaja bestowed on him the title "Kavi Kunjaram" – kunjaram meaning elephant – thus declaring him a mammoth among poets, and appointed him as samasthāna vidvān.

The Ramanathapuram king, Ramalinga Sethupati, also appointed Kavi Kunjara Bharathi as samasthāna vidvān – he thus became the samasthana vidvan of two principalities.

Kavi Kunjara Bharathi wrote several types of compositions including āsiriyappa, viruttam, veṇba, selvisai, kīrtanai, padam, nittiya urcava songs, wedding songs, bhajanai sampradāya songs, folk songs, etc.

The first book of his padam-s was brought out in 1886 by Pushparatha Chettiar – it contained 37 compositions. In 1915, Kavi Kunjara Bharathi's grandson, Koteeswara Iyer, published a book of his grandfather's kīrtanai-s – composed on several temples and deities in the area.

His Rāmāyaṇa Samkshépa Kīrtanam is used as pārāyaṇam in his family. He composed on day-to-day tumult – even when a buffalo fell ill, the story goes the buffalo recovered right away! When someone usurped the family lands, he composed the śatru siṅgāra āsiriyappa in 14 stanzas in a style highly reminiscent of Arunagirinathar.

His Śrī Mīnakshī Adaikalamālai is sung whenever the family undergoes any difficulties. It has not been sung much outside his family.

His famous dance drama, the Azhagar Kuravaṅḡi was first published in 1916 by Koteeswara Iyer. In 1963, another version was brought out by K. Nagamani, the son of Koteeswara Iyer.

The Ramanathapuram Sethupati's brother, Ponnusami Tevar, asked Kavi Kunjara Bharathi to set the Skanda Purāṇam as kīrtanai-s. He wanted it to be like the Rāma Nāṭakam, and spent five years, from age 55 to 60, working on it. It featured 240 kīrtanai-s and 300 viruttam-s and was published by Koteeswara Iyer.

Following this, he retired from public life, living impeccably, avoiding affiliation with any samasthānam. He never sang 'nara stuti' either, despite being in two samasthānam-s.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's  
YouTube channel – [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y\\_ILePreXnQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y_ILePreXnQ)

**Lakshmi Anand**

## 26 December, 2022

### Pt. Bhimsen Joshi, a Centenary Tribute

The 11th day's session began with the rendition of an Abhang by Supriya (III ASCM). Sangita Kalanidhi designates Lalgudi GJR Krishnan and Vijayalakshmi chaired the session.

The centenary tribute of Pt. Bhimsen Joshi was presented by Pt. Nagaraj Rao Havaladar.

Born in 1922 in Gadag, Karnataka, Bhimsen Joshi underwent tutelage in Hindustani music under the guidance of Pt. Sawai Gandharva. He emerged as an unparalleled luminary of the Kirāna Gharāna; his name eventually becoming synonymous with Hindustani music and Bhakti Saṅgīt in Marathi and Kannada, resonating among rasika-s worldwide.

Regardless of the genre he explored, Joshi adhered to a fundamental principle of economy in his music, be it in notes, phrases, or even repertoire. Over his remarkable 75-year career, he delved into no more than 35 rāga-s, emphasizing quality over quantity. Through the extensive repetition of pieces in his repertoire, he cultivated a sense of familiarity and comfort, which the audience instantly arrived at.

Joshi's relationship and interaction with fellow musicians, even those outside his discipline, is a lore of rich musicality in itself. He popularly took a sabbatical from performance at the peak of his career, to further his contemplation of music, engaging with the luminaries of yore like Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, MS Subbulakshmi, and Begum Akhtar.

He was not just an incomparable performer; he was a consummate musician. His responsibility towards music was not confined to just individual performances and teaching. He extended his impact as the founder and organizer of the renowned Sawai Gandharva Festival. He personally made sure that the proceedings of the festival were up to par, and the contributing musicians were cared for holistically.

With his rich demonstration filled with anecdotes about Pt. Bhimsen Joshi, and musical snippets, Pt. Nagaraja Rao Havaladar transported the audience into the ambience of Joshi's iconic music.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel – <https://youtu.be/8J54vYO2B8g?si=MT6RZ9b7vigRegVI>

**Lashman**

**27 December, 2022**

### **MD Ramanathan – a Centenary Tribute**

The 12th day's session began with the rendition of MD Ramanathan's *Sagara Sayana Vibho* in raga *Bhageshree* by Sanjana (IIIASCM). Sangita Kalanidhi designates Lalgudi GJR Krishnan and Vijayalakshmi chaired the session.

Vidvān Prince Rama Varma presented the centenary tribute in memory of vidvān MD Ramanathan.

Sanjana, a III year student of the Advanced School of Carnatic Music, sang MD Ramanathan's *Sāgara śayana vibho* as prayer.

Prince Rama Varma began by acquainting the viewers with the many talented luminaries from Palghat which he described as the cultural hub of Kerala much like Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu. One such musician, CS Krishna Iyer, introduced MD Ramanathan (MDR) to the Trivandrum royal family. MDR came from a musical family and gave his first concert when he was only nine years old.

Self-effacing, innocent and childlike, the imposing six-footer MDR was also uncompromising in his convictions, musically and personally. He initially learned from his father Devesa Bhagavatar. After graduating with B.Sc Physics from Victoria College, Palghat, he moved to Madras, to Kalakshetra, as the sole student of the *Saṅgīta Śiromaṇi* course under Sangita Kalanidhi Tiger Varadachariar. It was an ideal guru-śiṣya relationship — with MDR the śiṣya, quickly grasping everything that Tiger Varadachariar had to offer. Tiger did not allow anything to be written and perhaps as a result, many of MDR's compositions do not have notation either. MDR joined Kalakshetra as a teacher in 1948, subsequently becoming Professor and then Principal.

MDR joined his guru six years before the latter's demise – thus well past Tiger's prime. A frequent criticism was that he needlessly copied voice characteristics of his aged guru as well.

His first concert at The Music Academy was in 1951, as a substitute for TR Mahalingam. He was accompanied by Sangita Kalanidhi-s TN Krishnan and Palghat Mani Iyer. Earlier, he had won second prize at a competition at The Music Academy.

He wrote numerous articles on music in various periodicals and journals. He won several awards at state and national levels including the Padma Shri but was not conferred the *Saṅgīta Kalānidhi*. He cut an LP record in which he was accompanied by Sangita Kalanidhi-s MS Gopalakrishnan and TV Gopalakrishnan.

His concerts usually started with a varṇam. He was particularly fond of the Kalyāṇī Āṭa tāḷa varṇam which featured a gamaka in practically every note. MDR was special in his ability to sing both suddha svara-s and gamaka-s equally well. A song on Lord Ganesa invariably followed, often Vātāpi. MDR enjoyed niraval in the madhyama kāla sāhitya. Many of his concerts included navagraha kṛti-s with ciṭṭasvara-s he had composed. Pañcaratna-s also featured frequently in his kutcheri-s.

He composed prolifically using the signature ‘Varadadāsa’. Types of compositions included gītam, jatisvaram, tāna varṇam, pada varṇam, kṛti-s, rāgamālīka varṇam and kṛti-s, group kṛti-s, tillāna, śloka-s in Sanskrit and Malayalam, viruttam-s in Tamil and divya nāmasaṅkīrtanam. He wrote in Telugu, Sanskrit, Tamil, Malayalam and Maṇipravāḷam. He also composed several dance dramas at Kalakshetra.

The deities he composed on included Ganesa, Siva, Parvati, Muruga, Rama, Krishna, Padmanabha, Sarasvati, Ayyappa, Guruvayurappa, Madurai Meenakshi, Kanyakumari, Poorna Trayeesha and the Manjapuresha Ayyappa temples. He also composed on humans including on Tyagaraja, Dikshitar, Tiger Varadachariar, Syama Sastri, Purandaradasa, Rukmini Devi and C Rajagopalachari.

MDR passed away on 27 April, 1984.

Saṅgīta Kalānidhi TV Gopalakrishnan, viduṣi Dr. Rama Kausalya, and the three Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designates vidvān-s Neyveli Santhanagopalan, Lalgudi GJR Krishnan and viduṣi Lalgudi Vijayalakshmi shared their thoughts.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eDTnLTbVaqU>

**Lakshmi Anand**

**28 December, 2022**

### **Learning Music, different Methods & Advantages – A Panel Discussion**

The 13th day's session began with the rendition of Tyagaraja's Guruleka etuvanti in raga Gaurimanohari by Diya Yanmantram (III ASCM). Sangita Kalanidhi designates Lalgudi GJR Krishnan and Vijayalakshmi chaired the session.

The prayer, Guruleka eṭuvaṇṭi, was sung by Divya Enmantram of the Advanced School of Carnatic Music of the Music Academy.

Saṅgīta Kalānidhi viduṣi Sudha Ragunathan chaired the panel. The other panel members were Saṅgīta Kalānidhi Dr. S. Sowmya, Palghat Dr. R. Ramprasad, Anirudh Athreya and Sarvepalli Sreya.

Viduṣi Sudha Ragunathan began by going over the various ways music was/is learned, from then to now — including true gurukulavāsam, then the version where the student spent significant time with the guru but did not live with him/her, the pāṭṭu class, institutionalised learning including those like Kalakshetra that gave their own diplomas, learning through tapes, from CDs, music albums, etc., to the present technology aided teaching where platforms such as Zoom, Skype etc., abound. All India Radio's contribution was also mentioned where expert musicians taught on the radio with notation that could be obtained.

The first round comprised the panellists describing their own learning and how they actually assimilated the material.

Sudha said that all her learning from Sangita Kalanidhi ML Vasanthakumari was purely from 'kéḷvi gnānam' and from singing along with her, observing her every lip movement – there were never any actual classes. MLV, she said, would stress on repeated listening in order to totally internalise the music.

Dr. Sowmya said she spent many weekends and vacations at her guru's (Sangita Kalanidhi Dr. S. Ramanathan) home until her family moved to Madras. It was music throughout at home but for the scant few hours Ramanathan slept. He taught Sowmya both vīṇa and vocal, often into the wee hours of the night. He would attend concerts, including dance programmes, and encourage his students to do so as well, always finding something to appreciate in each. He would suggest that we learn from authentic sources – Sowmya went to learn from Sangita Kala Acharya T. Muktha at his suggestion. Mukta was a perfectionist who believed in innumerable repetitions; all past lessons also had to be repeated – if any



was not sung properly, it was back to the beginning again. Neither Ramanathan nor Muktha permitted writing or notation.

As Palghat Ramprasad learned only from his father TR Rajaram, it became “automatic gurukulavāsam’. Rajaram passed on what Ramprasad’s grandfather, Sangita Kalanidhi Palghat Mani Iyer, had envisioned ought to be taught and learned. It was not merely music but a value system. Errors in music could be forgiven but never errors in behaviour. No taking notes was permitted in class. Learning was anchored on three aspects – repeated listening, repeated singing and the value system.

Anirudh Athreya learned from his grandfather’s younger brother, V Nagarajan. Having the guru in the same building meant that one could never escape practice. Anirudh recalled that after nine years of age, he never went to play nor did he have vacations – it was practise before and after class, during weekends and all other breaks. Nagarajan expected tonal clarity and perfection at all speeds – he was a strict teacher. Nagarajan passed away in 2002 after which Anirudh learned from Saṅgīta Kalānidhi TK Murthy, also a student of Thanjavur Vaidyanatha Iyer, like Nagarajan himself.

Sarvepalli Sreya, a student of Sudha Ragunathan explained how her guru would incorporate puzzles and challenges as part of learning. She mentioned singing kalpanasvara-s with a different ending note for each cycle and examining patterns within ciṭṭasvara-s.

The second round of the panel discussion examined how these individuals themselves taught and how it might be different from how they were taught. Sudha said Covid made her focus on teaching which she does in three groups online. She had found it helpful to incorporate interesting challenges in the curriculum and said it was essential to encourage manodharma.

Dr. Sowmya teaches both individual students and in person at institutions too at The Music Academy (which was ‘in person’ until Covid when it went online). She would explain the importance of knowledge of languages for students to understand the meaning of the lyrics, the different instrumental bāṇi-s and the importance of listening. All these, and the perfection she expected, were values imbibed from her own teachers. With institutionalised teaching, the fixed syllabus necessitated some changes like converting to svara-s, but even then, she would insist on both group and individual singing. She added that she did not believe in Musicology and Theory as separate entities.

Ramprasad said that he did not attempt to make the curriculum fun – he taught his students in the exact manner that he was taught. He screened all initial student requests with an intimidating boiler-plate that said that he might teach very few compositions

compared to other teachers and that 90 minutes of practise per day was a requirement. Since his students stayed on with him, he concluded that there was still place for that type of teaching.

Anirudh explained that as an instrumentalist, it was trickier to teach online. He would tell his students to value his time just as he valued theirs.

Sangita Kalanidhi-s Trichy Sankaran and A. Kanyakumari, Dr. Rama Kausalya, Dr. Sumathi Krishnan, and the three Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designates Tiruvarur Bakthavathsalam, Lalgudi Vijayalakshmi and Neyveli Santhanagopalan, all shared comments.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9NFMobjFtvw>

**Lakshmi Anand**

## 29 December, 2022

### Ithuvum Athu

The 14th day's session began with the rendition of Sangita Kalanidhi Dr S Ramanathan's Sabesan Sevani in raga Saveri by Ishwarya (III ASCM). Sangita Kalanidhi designates Lalgudi GJR Krishnan and Vijayalakshmi chaired the session.

For her ceremonial and highly anticipated lecture demonstration, Nritya Kalānidhi designate viduṣi Narthaki Nataraj had chose the topic "Ithuvum Athu" — This, too, is that.

The central theme of the presentation revolved around the ever-evolving and fluid nature of Bharatanāṭyam, and how this evolution, in turn, contributes to the authenticity of its spirit, and adds to its antiquity.

Narthaki presented five contemplative compositions, each delving into five fundamental values of human life, as celebrated in the Tamil milieu — paṇam (wealth), tavam (penance), guṇam (virtue), inam (community), manam (self) respectively.

1. Paṇamē pradhāna deivam – Sāvéri – Mísra Capu – Rajagopala Iyer
2. Puṇṇiyam pōi pāvam – Kāpi – Ādi – Mayuram Vedanayakam Pillai
3. Sirippudān varugudaiya – Cārukēśi- Ādi - Suddhananda Bharathi
4. Uṭṭakuzhiyil emañṇedūttu – Cenṇurṭti – Ādi - Siddharpāḍal
5. Unnaiye nī eṇṇiparu – Māyāmālavagowḷa – Ādi (tísra naḍai)

These compositions were handpicked and incorporated by Narthaki into her traditional repertoire of the Tanjore Quartet style, which she inherited from her illustrious guru, KP Kittappa Pillai. Despite being newer additions, the presentation of these pieces remained stylistically authentic to her tradition, emphasizing the notion that the new is not necessarily the opposite of the old but rather a meaningful reflection of it.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel – <https://youtu.be/aRQYGOJ2ysY?si=5XGIKoHhM1DIS8gy>

**Lashman**

## Avudai Akkal, Life and Compositions

The second lecture of the day was presented by Prof. Kanchana Natarajan on Avudai Akkal, her life and compositions. She was assisted by Viduṣi Nisha Rajagopal on vocals. The session was chaired by Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designates Vidvān Lālguḍi GJR Krishnan and Viduṣi Lalgudi Vijayalakshmi.

The lecture gave an insight into the personality of Avudai Akkal and her works, brimming with the concepts propounded in Advaitic philosophy. Akka's period can be roughly placed between the late 17th to the early 18th century when Tamil music was flourishing. The linguistic style of Akka is akin to the style of Arunachala Kavi, said the speaker. Akka's compositions are predominantly in Tamil with profuse use of Sanskrit words. She infused deep philosophical concepts through her free-flowing songs in a lucid language; much understandable to the household Brahmin women of her times, transforming their spiritual and intellectual facets. For this reason, Akka's works are mainly transmitted and preserved through oral tradition by the women of Chenkottai.

It is regrettable that much information about the personal life of Akka is not available to us. However, the speaker was able to gather some details that are available as 'karṇa paramparā' from the elderly women of Chenkottai during her field study in 2010. Some auto-biographical references can also be seen in Akka's compositions. It can be inferred from the available sources that Akka was married young and became a child widow soon after. A wayfarer who walked past her house came as a savior and initiated her into the doctrine of Vedānta. He is identified as Sridhara Ayyaval of nāma saṅkīrtana fame. In the song 'Advaita meigñāna', Akka cites this incident elaborately. A musical rendition of the same was delivered by Nisha Rajagopal. It was indeed rare for a spiritual teacher to suddenly appear and give a young widow the highest vedāntic teaching. This is said to have created an uproar amongst the residents of the village resulting in ostracization of Akka from the community. She left the village, followed her master, and spent her life practicing austerity until she attained mukti. She is supposed to have lived for several years singing her compositions. She also had a band of women followers who sang, preserved, and propagated her compositions. Her passing away is also shrouded in mystery and it is said that she climbed up a hill in Kutralam, never to return.

Kanchana made an interesting comparison between the compositions of Avudai Akka and Sadasiva Brahmendra. Though the latter has composed on 'saguṇa brahṁam', he could be credited as one of the rarest composers to create compositions on 'nirguṇa' brahṁam. Whereas compositions like Bruhi mukundēti, Pibarē Rāma rasam, and Smara vāram', belong to the former category, his compositions like Pūrṇa bodhōham, and Ānanda pūrṇabodhōham,

fall under the latter category. The nirguṇa brah̥mam compositions define the sublime ‘oneness’ with the ever-pervading Parabrah̥mam. In this regard, Akka could be placed next to Sadasiva Brah̥mam, highlighted the speaker. Some of Akka’s compositions recounted here include Ānandam ānēn nānē and Cidāham paripūrṇōham.

The presenter next ventured into the variegated works of Akka. Though many of them can be set to a rāga and a tāla, some can be rendered only as viruttam or vacanam. Earlier, the kīrtanai-s of Akka were sung based on a meṭṭu of popular songs of those days. This gave a high degree of flexibility to Akka’s followers who were instrumental in spreading her compositions. However, this elasticity was lost after the availability of published material, resulting in attaching a kṛti to a fixed rāga (given in the published material), remarked the speaker.

Besides 74 ‘gñāna-para’ musical works structured in pallavi, anupallavi and caraṇa format that are extant, Akka has also authored many folk-styled compositions like ‘vēdānta kummi’, ‘kōlāṭṭa kummi’, ‘kiḷi kummi’, ‘ōḍam’, ‘pandāṭṭam’, ‘ammānai’, etc. Vēdānta kummi invites young girls for a dance called ‘kummi’. The song initiates the girls into four practices called ‘sādhana catuṣṭaya’ which helps remove attachment to children and spouses. This is an extraordinary text which introduces the girls to various vedāntic terminologies and concepts. A glimpse of ‘vēdānta kummi’ was demonstrated by Nisha.

Even mundane rituals like extracting castor oil from castor seeds and the rules associated with menstruation were connected to Advaita philosophy by Akka through songs composed on them. Two long songs, Vēdānta ammānai and Śrīvidyā śōbhanam, are sung, even today during menstruation in Chenkottai.

Interestingly, there are also some unusual songs dedicated to her master in the genre of bridal mysticism, which are simultaneously physical and meta-physical. The kṛti Āsai ānēn Vēṅkaṭēśasvāmi mēl was cited as an example which was sung by Nisha.

Akka also introduced the essence of Vēdānta into the daily activities of her followers through other means. She had devised a board game for women called ‘Pañcīkaraṇa viḷaiyāṭṭu’ based on Ādi Sankara’s Vēdāntic text Pañcīkaraṇa, which describes the Vēdānta doctrine of creation and dissolution of the cosmos. The game was played every ekādaśī by women.

The lecture was well received and the hall was open for discussion. V Sriram, Secretary of The Music Academy, cast doubt on the preceptor of Avudai Akkal and speculated that her master could be a yati belonging to her native place. He also mentioned that he had seen the compositions of Akka along with her life history in a handwritten

manuscript of vaiṇika vidvān Gomati Sankara Iyer. Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate Lalgudi Vijayalakshmi complimented the speaker and shared her thoughts on the compositions of Āvudai Akkaḷ.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AAF2OYtgK0&list=PLMhgEnEwYinfZndbqhHalt2DLc1125U9E&index=7>

**Aravindh Ranganathan**

**December 30, 2022**

### **Rāga Ālāpana on the Vīṇa**

The 15th day's session began with the rendition of R Sathyanarayana's composition Sri Veene Namaste, tuned by S Balachander in raga Kalyani by Magizhan Paridi (II ASCM). Sangita Kalanidhi designates Lalgudi GJR Krishnan and Vijayalakshmi chaired the session.

The first lecdem of the day was presented by vaiṇika viduṣi Jayanthi Kumaresh.

Why the Vīṇa? And what sets the ālāpana on the Vīṇa apart? It is because the Vīṇa emulates the voice in more fundamental and imperceptible ways, than vice versa, according to viduṣi Jayanthi Kumaresh. For instance, since the Vīṇa cannot, by construction, sustain long notes like a Flute or a Sāraṅgi, the start of an ālāpana is marked by the playing of notes of shorter duration. (for example, 'rr' in Sahāna). This is exactly how a vocal ālāpana would commence and progress too, although the voice has the capability to sustain notes for a much longer duration.

Jayanthi structured her presentation into three segments — technique, expression and aesthetics.

The making of the Vīṇa grandly influences the way the instrument is played. The Tanjore Vīṇa has a sturdy top board over the 'kuḍam' or the resonator, enabling forceful pulling of the strings to produce the quintessential gamaka-s, associated with the style. In contrast, the top board of a Mysore Vīṇa is much lighter, requiring the liberal usage of split fingering technique to achieve a similar effect, as vigorous pulling can cause the bridge on the board to sink.

A salient feature of the Vīṇa, as mentioned above, is its inability to sustain sound. A major advantage is the silence that arises in between the phrases, making way for the next phrase. "The death of the previous note gives birth to the next note," was remarked by Saṅgita Kalānidhi Lalgudi Vijayalakshmi, at the end of the presentation. However, when the ālāpana crescendos to the upper ṣaḍja, sustenance is essential. To overcome this drawback, the vaiṇika-s, over time, have developed the technique of using the side strings or the "pakka tandi" to provide the necessary continuity.

Expression on the Vīṇa essentially means the technique of playing the instrument. The left hand, which moves across the frets and pulls the strings, represents the ideas that wish to be conveyed, while the right hand, strumming the strings, is the voice that articulates those ideas. Both working in tandem is essential for effective expression.

Aesthetics encompass the guiding principles that form the framework of an artist's individual style. In this context, it is important to understand the often-discussed but misunderstood "Gāyakī style of playing the Vīṇa". Jayanthi clarified that Gāyakī is not about imitating a singing voice with the Vīṇa but letting the Vīṇa sing by bringing out its voice. Achieving the Gāyakī style requires an intimate understanding of one's instrument and developing a deep relationship with it.

If ālāpana is all about storytelling, Jayanthi believes, "What you tell, they already know. How you tell it sets you apart." Jayanthi Kumaresh, the eternal advocate for the Vīṇa, made a compelling case for the Vīṇa's potential not only in reflecting the music of its time but also in shaping its course, while discussing one of its complex facets — the 'ālāpana.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel – [https://youtu.be/a9ORUrfeo\\_A?si=dP3tZr\\_MclNYzNNj](https://youtu.be/a9ORUrfeo_A?si=dP3tZr_MclNYzNNj)

**Lashman**



## Compositions of Balantrapu Rajanikanta Rao

The second lecdem of the day, presented by viduṣi-s Sreemathi Ramnath & Shreya Ramnath, on Balantrapu Rajanikanta Rao and his compositions, was a delightful exploration of his enchanting musicality. Readers can read the essay on this topic written by the presenter herself, which has been published elsewhere in the journal.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's YouTube channel – <https://youtu.be/v7Pzp6xBqus?si=ouVcROak4Hri1d1j>

**Lashman**

**December 31, 2022**

### **Inside the Magnificent Mind of Lalgudi**

The 16th day's session began with devotional music by Varshini and team, runners up in the competition of the Music Academy. Sangita Kalanidhi designate Tiruvaarur Bakthavatsalam presided over the session.

The first lecture demonstration of the day was presented by Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate vidvān Lalgudi GJR Krishnan and viduṣi Lalgudi Vijayalakshmi.

The children of Lalgudi G. Jayaraman, Krishnan and Vijayalakshmi, began with their lineage that traces itself to Tyagaraja from six generations ago. They explained that Jayaraman's father, VR Gopala Iyer was his greatest influence – a fact Jayaraman had acknowledged directly too.

Gopala Iyer decided not to send his children to school, choosing instead to impart rigorous musical training to them. Jayaraman recollected his 4 am practice sessions then, by an oil lamp with the sounds of birds from nearby farms.

The only source of listening to music those days in the town of Lalgudi was an occasional radio broadcast in a loudspeaker at the nearby panchayat office – he would listen keenly to artistes like Bismillah Khan and Rajaratnam Pillai and literally run back home to practice what he had heard while still fresh in his mind.

Gopala Iyer conducted weekly bhajan sessions at home with local musicians – these sessions became mini concerts for Jayaraman, often with his sister Srimathi Brahmanandam. At this time, he tuned various Tiruppugazh-s, thus laying the foundation for his future composing.

As an accompanist, he made his mark immediately, with his ability to adapt to myriad styles with ease – his concerts with the likes of Sangita Kalanidhi-s GN Balasubramaniam, Madurai Mani Iyer, Alathur Brothers and Mudikondan Venkatarama Iyer and Madurai Somu were famous. He was known to reproduce the vocalists' complicated korvai-s to perfection – this, he explained, was the result of enjoying the music he heard as a rasika.

He maintained diaries, where he penned not only his thoughts but details of every concert he attended, with dates, names of co-artistes, compositions presented, etc. This revealed that he would perform his own compositions in concert. He engaged in self-reflection after every programme too.

Jayaraman mentioned how one's mental state reflected in one's music, how one ought to be disciplined in all aspects including maintenance of one's instrument and how one should be unceasing in practice throughout. He had arresting stage presence and high energy levels throughout – even at the fag end of concerts.

While demanding as a teacher, he was very child-like as well, getting most enthusiastic about nature, musical instruments like the piano, etc. He would send picture postcards to his students while on travel.

He was composing till the very end, even whilst he was ailing.

Saṅgīta Kalānidhi-s Umayalpuram K Sivaraman and Trichur V Ramachandran, vidvān Nagai Muralidharan, and Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designates Neyveli Santhanagopalan and Thiruvaarur Bakthavathsalam shared their thoughts at the conclusion of the programme.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's  
YouTube channel – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZhyrC0XAGj8>

**Lakshmi Anand**

## The Compositions and Works of Adibhatla Narayana Dasu

The last lecture of the year was by the Malladi Brothers vidvān Sreerama Prasad and vidvān Ravi Kumar on the compositions and works of Ādhibhaṭṭa Narayana Dasu. The session was chaired by Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate vidvān Thiruvaarur Bakthavathsalam.

The presenters began the session by introducing the composer to the audience. Narayana Dasu, a versatile poet and musician was born in 1864. He was well known for his Harikathā performances and promulgated the doctrine of ‘bhakti’ through several of his nirūpaṇa-s. He was also a vaiṇikā and jyōtiśa śāstra nipuṇa. Being a polyglot, he translated multiple works available in Sanskrit and English to Telugu. He held the post of Principal in Vijayarāma Gāna Pāṭhaśālā, the music college of Vizianagaram, established in 1919. He lived for 88 years and attained the lotus feet of God on the day of Puṣya Bahula Pañcamī.

The speakers then proceeded to explain the contributions made by Narayana Dasu towards the field of music and literature. Nirūpaṇa-s were his forte and he has composed thousands of kīrtana-s, interwoven with verses, to elaborate the theme considered in the Harikathā. Yathārta Rāmāyaṇa, Dhruva Caritramu, Prahlāda Caritramu, Sāvitrī Caritramu were some of his Harikathā-s. The Malladi Brothers amply demonstrated their talk with examples like ‘Kannavara’ and ‘Sītā manōnāyakā’ from the kathā Yathārta Rāmāyaṇa. This Harikathā is based on the story of Svāmī Sītā Rāmacandra and has six chapters from the birth of Rama to his paṭṭābhiṣēka. He has demonstrated his mastery over laya by employing rare tāḷa-s like saṅkīrṇa Ēka and catuśra Aṭa. They also rendered the kṛti-s Rāmā nava nava and Kamalākṣa set to the tāḷa-s catuśra Aṭa and miśra Tripuṭa respectively.

Malladi Sreerama Prasad and Ravikumar also provided a glimpse of other Harikathā-s composed by Narayana Dasu. A daṇḍaka from the Harikathā Sāvitrī Caritramu and a kīrtana popular in the Harikathā circuits of Andhra Pradesh ‘Vārānasi’ set to the rāga Pūrvīkalyāṇī was rendered. The mentioned kīrtana forms a part of the Harikathā Mārkaṇḍēya Caritramu. Another composition from the same nirūpaṇa Bālacaṇḍramaṇḍali, set to the rāga Punnāgavarāḷi was then rendered.

Apart from Harikathā-s, there are two monumental and stand-alone works of Narayana Dasu which are worth mentioning, namely ‘Daśavida Rāga Navatī Kusuma Mañjarī’ and ‘Pañcamukhī - Ṣaṇmukhī Rāga Tāḷa Prabandha’. The uniqueness of both of these compositions is that they can be sung in all the tāḷa-s derived from the five jāti-s of Ēka tāḷa. Daśavida Rāga Navatī Kusuma Mañjarī is a rāgamālīka composition composed using 90 rāga-s. This exceptional composition employs nine varieties of rāga-s namely, sarva sampūrṇa, sampūrṇa śāḍava, śāḍava sampūrṇa, sampūrṇa auḍava, auḍava sampūrṇa, suddha śāḍava, śāḍava auḍava, auḍava śāḍava, suddha auḍava and vakra rāga-s.

The speakers also mentioned his non-musical works like Rāmacandra Śatakamu, Kāśī Śatakamu, and translations of the works of Kalidasa, Shakespeare and Omar Khayyam into Telugu.

Sreerama Prasad and Ravi Kumar requested their father vidvān Malladi Suribabu present in the audience, to sing a viruttam authored by Narayana Dasu. Suribabu, belonging to the illustrious disciple lineage of Narayana Dasu through his teacher Sangita Kalanidhi Nedunuri Krishnamurthy, happily obliged.

The hall was open for discussion. Viduṣi Vishaka Hari remarked she had heard that Narayana Dasu used to present rāgam tānam pallavi during his Harikathā, for which the presenters said that Adibhatla Narayana Dasu was an aṣṭāvadhāni and competent enough to present rāgam tānam pallavi in any rāga/tāla extempore. Saṅgīta Kalānidhi designate Thiruvaarur Bakthavathsalam complimented the speakers for taking up this topic. Being the last session of the year, V Sriram, Secretary of The Music Academy requested the speakers to conclude the programme by singing a maṅgalam in the rāga Suruṭṭī composed by Narayana Dasu.



The lecture and discussions can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's  
YouTube channel – [https://www.youtube.com/  
watch?v=S4oztixBE1I&list=PLMhgEnEwYinfZndbqhHalt2DLc1125U9E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S4oztixBE1I&list=PLMhgEnEwYinfZndbqhHalt2DLc1125U9E)

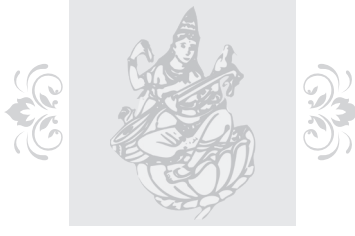
**Aravindh Ranganathan**

## January 1, 2023

The Music Academy's Committee was 'At Home' to its members on January 1, 2023. After the traditional breakfast, the Open House began at the Kasturi Srinivasan Hall. The proceedings began with congregational singing by Swagatham, the winners of the devotional singing competition of the Music Academy. Apart from Sangita Kalanidhi designates Neyveli Santhanagopalan, Tiruvaarur Bhaktavatsalam, Lalgudi GJR Krishnan and Lalgudi Vijayalakshmi, members of the Experts Committee such as Sangita Kalanidhi Sudha Raghunathan, Dr Ritha Rajan, Dr RS Jayalakshmi and Dr Rama Kausalya were present on stage. They gave their critical remarks over the conduct of the conference and expressed satisfaction at the way it was conducted. The Sangita Kalanidhi designates summed up their experience of the previous 15 days. V Sriram, Convenor, thanked the Sangita Kalanidhi designates, members of the Experts Committee, the students of the Advanced School of Carnatic Music, the staff of the Music Academy and M/S Compuprint for bringing out the journal,. Members of the audience also expressed their happiness over the conference and gave suggestions for improvement in the future years. The Conference then formally concluded.



The recording of the Open House can be seen at the Music Academy's YouTube channel – <https://youtu.be/6HcI5ASqZCs?si=6v71i-ptWC0U3Hmf>



## The Sadas

Technology can create a complete concert experience online, said N. Chandrasekaran, Chairman, TATA Sons Private Ltd., at the Sadas of The Music Academy Madras, held on Sunday 1st January 2023. He said technology could come in handy while creating an online concert experience.

Presiding over the Sadas of the 96th annual conference and concerts of the Music Academy and conferring the Sangita Kalanidhi and other awards, he said while concerts went online during the pandemic, they could not create the atmosphere of a live performance.

He pointed out that Carnatic music itself had constantly evolved and said, “If we have to face the future, we have to understand that online concerts are here to stay, and this has happened in every industry. The trick is how to get it going.” Sri Chandrasekaran said while creating a fantastic Carnatic experience the challenge was how to get the attention of the youngsters.

On the question of creating a “concert experience online” he said there was enough technology to make it happen. Earlier, he conferred the Sangita Kalanidhi Award on vidvan Neyveli R. Santhanagopalan (2020), mridangam maestro Thiruvaarur P. Bakthavathsalam (2021), and the violin duo Lalgudi G.J.R. Krishnan and his sister Lalgudi Vijayalakshmi (2022).

Sangita Kala Acharya Awards went to nagaswaram player Kizhvelur N.G. Ganesan (2020), Dr. Ritha Rajan (2021) and Dr. R.S. Jayalakshmi (2022). The TTK Awards were presented to Thamarakkad Govindan Namboothiri (2020), Nemani Somayajulu (2021) and A.V. Anand (2022). The Musicologist Award went to Dr. V. Premalatha. Sri. Chandrasekaran also distributed prizes to artistes who won various competitions.

N. Murali, president of The Music Academy, said the awards were not given in 2020 and 2021 because there was only a shortened online festival due to the pandemic caused by COVID-19. “Awards are best cherished only when the honoured artistes receive them in

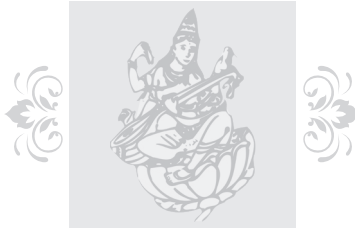
the physical presence of their peers, rasikas, admirers, well-wishers and members of their family. So, we decided to give the awards for the missed years along with those for 2022,” he explained.

*Courtesy: The Hindu*



The event can be viewed in full on the Music Academy's  
YouTube channel – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QGnXC7WfX70>





## The 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Dance Festival

### **Nritya Kalanidhi Awards presented at inauguration of Music Academy's 16th Dance Festival**

The 16th Dance Festival of The Music Academy got under way in Chennai on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2023, with the presentation of the Nritya Kalanidhi Awards to eminent dance exponents and gurus Rama Vaidyanathan (2020), Narthaki Nataraj (2021) and Bragha Bessell (2022).

Speaking after presenting the awards, Judith Ravin, Consul General, U.S Consulate General, Chennai, said music, art, and culture bridged people, communities and countries. They created bonds that transcend barriers and boundaries. She said artists played a critical role in further strengthening the US-India cultural and people-to-people ties.

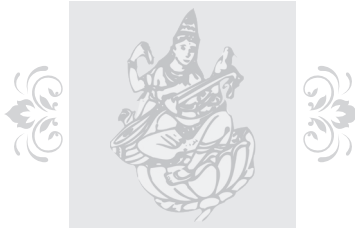
The Music Academy, Ms. Ravin said, was among her early discoveries when researching about life in Chennai prior to her arrival here. A city that celebrates traditional art forms during each December Music Season, convening the public for several thousand music and dance performances throughout the day across multiple venues in the city, said much about the soul of the place and its inhabitants, she added.

In his address, N. Murali, president of The Music Academy, said that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Academy had to skip its annual dance festival in January in 2021 and had conducted an online, shortened, three-day dance festival in January 2022. The Academy, dance fraternity, connoisseurs and rasikas had been eagerly looking forward to the resumption of its in-person festival with all its features.

Without the physical festival, the prestigious Nritya Kalanidhi Award could not be given. The Executive Committee, therefore, decided to give the awards for the missed years along with that of the year 2022.

The 16th edition of the Dance Festival was held from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023; it had a total of 32 performances including Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, Kathakali, Mohiniyattam, Odissi, Vilasini Natyam, Kathak and group performances.

*Courtesy: The Hindu*



## Ananda Coomaraswamy: The Dance of Siva and its Influence in South East Asia

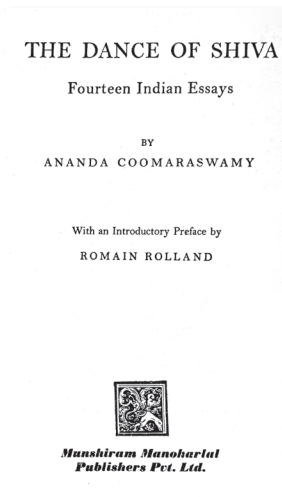
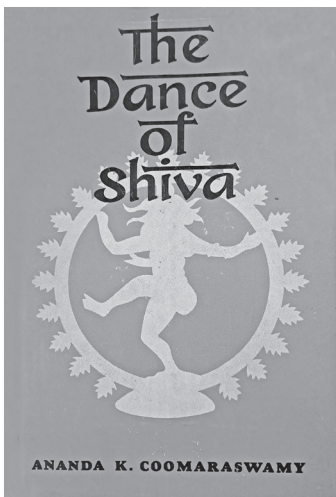
**Nāṭya Kalā Ācharya Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam**  
*Bharatanrityam exponent, Scholar and Teacher*

Ananda K. Coomaraswamy was born in 1887 in Ceylon, and lived a life of great purpose until 1947. It is hard to imagine that one head would have been a natural human Google that assimilated, analysed, and delineated a plethora of subjects relating to Asian civilisation. Coomaraswamy graduated in London and became the Director of Mineralogical Survey of Ceylon. Between 1906 and 1917, he was the curator of Indian Art at the Boston Museum. He also formed societies for the study of Indian art. In 1938, he became the Chairman of the National Committee for India's Freedom. Coomaraswamy is to be thanked for his having validated to the entire world the quintessence of the spiritual culture of the Orient. This was a phenomenal success, particularly when we recapitulate the status of



the Eastern world, at a time when Europe was exploiting the material riches of the Orient under the “banner of Christ or civilisation”, as remarked by Romain Rolland in his foreword to Coomaraswamy's book, ‘The Dance of Siva’.

Coomaraswamy's revolution was through his intellectual power of thought and



expression, that his writings had a great role in the renaissance of and recognition for Eastern wisdom. He, like many other scholars of Indian origin, was first noticed and honoured by the West, thanks to the open-mindedness of America. This essay is an analysis of his contribution to South-East Asia, and that too mainly through his book, *The Dance of Siva*. No amount of pages and hours can do justice to the multifarious subjects he dealt with and brought out a kaleidoscopic view of South-East Asia through his writings. His linguistic scholarship ranging from Sanskrit, Tamil, English, to a few more languages, and his expertise in history, interpretation of sculpture, painting, and other relevant arts of the region is awe-inspiring. He is seen as an admirer of both the sides of our globe, with no hesitation to criticise bluntly the judgmental attitude of the West due to ignorance or intentional misinterpretations. Among his 500 books and articles, my article will be limited to just a few of them which have made permanent imprints on the entire world to this day.

It is more than half a century since I started tasting the study of Indology. The first ever book that was fortunately thrust on me by my brother Balakrishnan was *The Dance of Siva* by Ananda Coomaraswamy. Balakrishnan was a documentary film producer-director, and he was preparing a script for a film on temples and festivals of Tamil Nadu. His illness required bedrest for a month and it was providential that my father K. Subrahmanyam suggested that I read the relevant books to him by his bedside. That opened a new vista for life for me. The first impression of the essay of *The Dance of Siva* was the seed for my ever-growing interest in the heritage of India and the spiritual basis for the Eastern arts. My dance grew with such nourishment of intellectualism and spiritual manure. Like how saint-poet Avvaiyar's *Āticūḍi* is a literature relevant for someone who is six or even sixty years old, Coomaraswamy's *The Dance of Siva* keeps revealing more as one grows. The reason is the profundity of permanent value of the content and its presentation. The meaning of the word 'dance' keeps enlarging in multi-dimensions from mere physical form to cosmic cognisance.

Before going into *The Dance of Siva*, it is of great relevance to divert our attention to Coomaraswamy's English translation of Nandikesvara's Sanskrit manual *Abhinaya Darpaṇam*, which Coomaraswamy termed as "Mirror of Gesture" which is nearest to the Sanskrit term "*Abhinaya Darpaṇam*". It was a time, in 1917, when the British and most of the English-educated Indians had least respect for Indian classical dance. The Devadasi system of female dancers being attached to Hindu temples was still prevalent as a ritual in temples in many parts of India. The downfall of Hindu kings and the emergence of the Christian-oriented British Empire was causing a chain reaction in the sociology of dance art, and there was an anti-dance movement gaining momentum in India. Though the original text of *Abhinaya Darpaṇam*, and its Telugu and Tamil translations, were in the hands of some great traditional dance teachers and scholars for reference, the publication of an English

translation of this work created tremendous interest and respect for the art. This new trend emerged due to the fact that it was first noticed by the Western scholars, art critics, and artistes, who started taking the trouble of understanding the value of Indian classical dance. Coomaraswamy's contribution in trumpeting the glory of dance heritage from the point of view of the very technique of physical expression, is therefore phenomenal. It also had its reflection in the renaissance of the art within India. Rukmini Devi Arundale included the study of Abhinaya Darpaṇam at her Kalakshetra. Indian scholars like Manmohan Ghosh, who later translated the *Nāṭya Śāstra*, also brought out English translations of Abhinaya Darpaṇam, adding notes on its date.

Let us examine how the Western world reacted to *Mirror of Gesture*. La Meri, a French dancer who popularised Eastern dance, in her letter to Prof. Mohan Khokar, reveals her pioneering efforts. She writes, "My first glimpse of Eastern dance was a concert of St. Denis in 1915". She also mentions seeing the dance presentation of Anna Pavlova, the Russian ballerina, partnered by Uday Shankar, in 1930 in Paris. La Meri and St. Denis started a school in the USA. La Meri had begun her career in 1928 itself, and we understand that Uday Shankar presented her a copy of Coomaraswamy's *Mirror of Gesture*. La Meri states that those were times when people were stimulated by India, and Coomaraswamy was called upon to give lectures in public and through radio. Even earlier than that, Ted Shawn visited India in 1926, and ordered a *tiruvāsi* (arch) from Mahabalipuram, which he used in his concerts for him to pose as Nataraja. This was the magic of Coomaraswamy's writings of the two books, *Mirror of Gesture* and *The Dance of Siva*. Both these books have continued to interest the people of the West to this day.

Let us now turn our attention to the Eastern world. Fred Frumberg, the co-editor of the book *Beyond the Apsara — Celebrating Dance in Cambodia*, writes, "One might think of the graceful figures immortalised on canvas by Rodin when the Royal Ballet made their first tour of France during the World Expo in 1906". Coomaraswamy, in his introduction to *Mirror of Gesture*, has quoted the letter of Gordon Craig, written in 1915, asking for books of technical instruction in the too-long neglected field of dance. The letter states, "I want to cautiously open this precious and dangerous (only to us queer folk) book of technical instruction before the men go crazy over the lovely dancers of the King of Cambodia, before the 'quaintness' tickles them, before they see a shortcut to a sensation". The importance of the pioneering efforts of Coomaraswamy is clear from both Eastern and Western points of view. Chey Chankethya says in her essay in the book *Beyond the Apsara*, that there has been a lack of written documentation though dance served mainly a religious purpose from the first to the sixth century, as evidenced from Hindu divinities like eight-armed Vishnu from Takeo Province of Cambodia. She writes, "However, following the influences from Indian court dancing (possibly as early as 8th Century), a clear structure

of movement was established in Cambodian dance”. Chey Chankethya is also concerned that “traditional culture is threatened by the globalisation of new culture that has powerful influence on young”. I remember Her Royal Highness Princess Bupha Devi telling me in her personal conversation that *Eysey* (that is, “wise man”) of her country is none other than Bharatamuni of India. I photographed his mask at the Phnom Penh Museum. This venerable image is also in the altar of the great choreographer Sophiline Cheam Shapiro’s theatre. The Princess, in her article in the same book, is quite vociferous about her anxiety regarding “wrong outside influences” in the process of new developments. To Cambodia, and perhaps to other South-East Asian countries, my humble suggestion is that they follow Coomaraswamy’s *Mirror of Gesture* for reviving their ancient roots, to nourish new flowers and fruits in their dance field. Cambodian classical dance was awarded World Heritage status by UNESCO in 2003 and repeated in 2005. Amrita Performing Arts (derived from the Sanskrit word “amrita” meaning eternal), based in Phnom Penh, has a mission to promote, preserve, and sustain heritage while developing creative expression. What could be a better method than receiving from the common cultural heritage of South-East Asia? What could be an impetus more appropriate than the works of Coomaraswamy for guidance? I have seen shots of a documentary where the local dancers of Laos are seen dancing with a big figure of Nataraja as their background. It shows that the roots are not lost.

Abhinaya Darpaṇam has an invocation to Lord Siva, the King of dancers, though the text deals with the technique of physical expression. “Abhinaya” means the art of communication. Coomaraswamy’s translation is based on the second edition of the text, edited by Tiruvēkatachāri of Needamangalam (1887). Coomaraswamy’s translation of the popular prayer that begins as “Āṅgikambhuvanam...” goes as follows: “The movement of whose body is the world, whose speech is the sum of all language, whose jewels are the Moon and stars, to that Siva, I bow.” The footnote adds the following: “In this verse, Siva is compared to an actor, whose means of expression (Abhinaya) are gesture, voice and costume. He reveals Himself through the world, the speech of men, and the starry firmament. The image of Siva as dancer (Nataraja or Natesa) and actor is everywhere conspicuous in Śaiva literature (see *The Dance of Siva* by A K Coomaraswamy, Siddhanta Deepika Vol. XIII;).” We are able to realise that the *Mirror of Gesture* is almost a sequel to *The Dance of Siva*. The order seems to follow the old tradition of the East in imparting systematic and specialised knowledge through introducing holistic wisdom. *The Dance of Siva* is a cosmic vision and *Mirror of Gesture* is a unitary technical training. Coomaraswamy thus dealt with the macro and then descended to the micro level through these two works. This is in consonance with the ancient Indian educational system in which the pupil was taught the individual’s relationship with the entire creation, followed by unitary specialisation of subjects. Education is called “*vidyā*” in Sanskrit, and the definition is “*Sā vidyā yā*

vimuktayé”, i.e., education is that which liberates. The Dance of Siva deals with the metaphysical and the Mirror of Gesture delineates the physical. The two together make a whole. Mere use of the gestures without the Hindu spiritual conviction has the danger of making the dance robotic.

Abhinaya is four-fold — Āṅgika (physical), Vācika (verbal), Āhārya (external features), and Sātvika (internal status). These four mediums of expressions classified in the Indian dramatic art are recognised in the very first verse in the personae of Lord Siva. His Āṅgika abhinaya or physical expression is His very manifestation of the world; all verbal sounds are His speech; His ornamentation is the galaxy of Moon and stars; and the author says he bows to that Satvika Siva. “*Sat*” implies the mind and also the superior guṇa among the three guṇa-s or qualities (Satva, Rajas, Tamas). Satva is the pure consciousness, which is the ultimate truth, i.e. satyam. It is the first syllable in the phrase “Sat-cit-ānanda”. “*Sat*” means consciousness; “*cit*”, the mind; and “*ānanda*” is bliss. Satva is a word with several layers of meaning and understanding. Śivam denotes auspiciousness, hence the salutation is to that pure consciousness which is auspicious. Satvika abhinaya is an outcome of the mental capacity to internalise what is external, and the other three abhinaya-s help in externalising what has been internalised. There is constant interaction between Satvika and Āṅgika; the two works of Coomaraswamy need a reciprocal realisation of the different planes of the art. Like how Yōga is the union of the discipline of body and mind, the study of the two works itself is an experience of Yōga.

The primary lesson for the Indian dancer is the form and use of the hand gestures. Abhinaya Darpaṇam is in the form of Indra — the king of the gods, requesting Nandikesvara — the vehicle of Lord Siva, to reveal the meaning of the laws of dancing. He says that in order to defeat the dancer in the court of the demons, Indra needs lessons on Bharatārṇava of 4000 verses, but in a concise form. Hence, we understand that Nandikesvara gave lessons through Abhinaya Darpaṇam, an abridged text. The contents include the following — definitions of Nāṭya, Nṛtta, and Nṛtya; the occasions for their performance; the qualification of the audience; the seven limbs of the audience like men of learning, poets, elders, singers, buffoons, and experts in history and mythology; the chief guest and his qualifications; the ministers; the stage; the ideal pātra, i.e. actor/actress, their deficiency; the dancer; the qualification of ankle bells; the male dancer-cum-actor; the outer life of the actor (like the orchestra); inner life (like good qualities); the ideal programme starting with a prayer (Puṣpāñjali) or the opposite of it i.e., the result of witnessing dance without prayer is to be childless or to be born in the wombs of animals. The course of dance (Nāṭyakrama) as followed by ancestors is to be followed. After Puṣpāñjali, the dance has to begin. The meaning is to be shown by hand gestures, mood conveyed through glances, and rhythm be

marked by feet. Where the glances go, the mind follows; where the mind goes, the mood follows; and where the mood goes; there is flavour (Rasa).

Abhinaya Darpaṇam is concerned only with Āṅika abhinaya. The bodily gestures are three-fold namely Aṅga, Pratyāṅga, and Upāṅga, i.e. the major limbs and the minor limbs of the body and face. The variations of the positions of the head, different kinds of glances, single and combined hand gestures, special gestures to denote different deities and incarnations of Vishnu, the planets, the seven upper and lower worlds, different kings, different mountains, different rivers, trees, animals, birds, water animals, relatives, the basic four Varṇa-s and fourteen more castes.

As stated earlier, the Mirror of Gesture is a translation of Abhinaya Darpaṇam edited by Tiruvenkatachari who, with his expertise in Bharata Śāstra, introduced extracts from relevant other works. There is enough scope for enlarging the method of communication that is available for the dances of South-East Asia.

Coomaraswamy's aerial view of South-East Asia was a travel back in time, noticing the analogies with the brick temples of Gupta period and early Pallava architecture of South India. In his essay "Further India and Indonesia", in his book Introduction to Indian Art, he has shown how from about CE 400-800, the primitive and cubic architecture of Prapatom in Siam, numerous sites in Cambodia, the Mison group of Champa, and the Dierig plateau groups in Java, are markedly Indian in character and purest in form. He has mentioned, naturally, Borobudur (late 19th Century) and Candi Lorojongrang group at Prambanan (about CE 900 in Java) for the luxurious architecture and rich decoration. He also concludes this essay by emphatically mentioning that "it is primarily in the theatre (music and classical dances of Burma, Siam, Cambodia, and above all, Java) that the splendour and spiritual power of the old Indo-Chinese and Indonesian culture can now be best understood".

It is not out of place here to narrate a miracle in my life. I was asked by His Holiness Sri ChandrasekharendraSaraswatiSwamigal, the centenarian sage of Kanchi, to design a new set of Karaṇa figures of Siva and Parvati based on my reconstruction of these movements from Nāṭya Śāstra. I gave my designs to the sculptor only after getting the approval from the sage. He asked me if I had been to Indonesia, and I replied "No". He commanded that I visit it. It took twelve years to complete the sculpture series and mount them in the temple that was built at his behest at Satara in Maharashtra, India. I visited the Prambanan temple on way to my receiving the Fukuoka Asian Cultural Award. Dr. Alessandra Iyer, an Italian who teaches Archaeology in London, accompanied me, for she was doing her Post-Doctoral research on Nāṭya Śāstra in Indonesia under me. To my greatest surprise, I discovered 62 Karaṇa sculptures in the Siva temple, which later Alessandra analysed



as miraculously tallying with my designs and reconstruction of the movements. How did His Holiness instruct me to go to Indonesia? And how did Coomaraswamy notice the relationship between the living tradition of the dance technique several decades ago? In fact, the Indonesian Karaṇa sculptures are still not noticed by the local scholars and dancers. The visionary that Coomaraswamy was, he could see the historic connectivity beyond time. I have to again quote Coomaraswamy. In his book *Introduction to Indian Art*, he writes thus: “All Indian art has been produced by professional craftsmen following traditions handed down in pupillary succession. Originality and novelty are never intentional. Changes in form, distinguishing the art of one age from that of another, reflect the necessities of current theology and not the intention of genius”. Yes, it is certainly theology leading to art and that in turn leading to an experience of the throbbing of the individual heart in the rhythm of cosmic movement that brought about, unintentionally, this link beyond time and space in my life. It is the cumulative blessing of His Holiness and the faith strengthened by the constant presence of Coomaraswamy’s *The Dance of Siva* in my sub-conscious for so many decades.

According to Indian cosmology, the Mount Meru, which is a symbol of Goddess Sakti or Cosmic Energy, reaches into the heavens that houses the gods. It is the centre of the continent called Jambudvīpa. Some scholars have identified this as the Pamir Mountain. Four Varṣa-s, i.e., land masses, are like the petals of a lotus with Meru in the middle. On the South is Bharatavarsha (Bhāratavarsha), which includes the entire South-East Asia, and the term ‘Bharata-Khanda’ refers to the Indian subcontinent. Puranic geography is an interesting study, revealing the history of geography. Bharatavarsha includes Indonesia. Sri Sathya Sai Baba had explained the term ‘Bharata’. ‘Bha’ is a bīja or seed syllable which signifies Brahman, i.e. the all-pervading Divinity. According to Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, ‘Brahman’ has its root in ‘bhra’ meaning movement. This is quoted by Fritz Kapra, in his “*Tao of Physics*”, wherein he compared ‘Tathagatha’ — Buddha’s name meaning ‘he who moves on’. ‘Bha’rata is explained by Sri Sathya Sai Baba as ‘one who revels in the thought of Brahman’. The entire South-East Asia, or for that the entire Eastern world, is made up of a spiritual culture. The concept of Siva as dancer and dance becoming part of worship, for which the cultivated laws of dance as propounded by Bharatamuni in his *Nāṭya Śāstra*, seems to have been a common phenomena in the Eastern world. The Āgama Śāstra-s influenced the icons of the entire Hindu world. The Dhyāna śloka-s describing the deities were meditated upon, and Coomaraswamy has shown, in another work of his, how the Hindu sculptor is not a creator but a revealer. Having meditated with the Dhyāna śloka-s, he visualises the deity in the boulder and just removes the unwanted portions of it, thus revealing the dēvata. Such being the theological and yogic connection, the Nṛttamūrti form of Siva, all over the Hindu world, has had the *Nāṭya Śāstra* as the base.



The 108 Karaṇa-s are 108 dance actions described in the *Nāṭya Śāstra* as those performed by Siva himself. The story goes that Siva commanded his attendant Tandu to teach these movements to Bharatamuni, and hence dance came to be referred to as ‘Tāṇḍava’. The earliest Karaṇa sculptures in India are those discovered at the Brihadeeswara temple at Thanjavur, belonging to early 11th Century. Following this are the Siva figures found at the Sarngapani Swamy temple at Kumbakonam, belonging to the 12th Century. The third is the Nataraja temple at Chidambaram where each of the four gōpuram-s contain a complete set of 108 Karaṇa sculptures. When I visited the Prambanan temple in Java, I discovered 62 Karaṇa panels and managed to identify 53 of them.

The Karaṇa panels are found in the balustrade of the Siva temple at Prambanan. This temple is identified locally as Candi Lorojongrang, and is one of the largest Hindu temple complexes in the world belonging to 9th Century. The temple was first noticed in 1733, and it was in shambles as an aftermath of an earthquake in the 15th Century. It has taken about 200 years for the Dutch archaeologists to reconstruct the central, tallest Siva temple.

Ninety years have galloped away since Coomaraswamy’s *The Dance of Siva* was first published. Like returning to the refrain of a song, I come back to this book for its eternal value. This particular essay is like an antenna for tuning our minds to the cosmic reverberation of the constant dance of Siva. The purpose of Coomaraswamy is to show the power of the soul for the welfare of humanity. Romain Roland describes it as the “vast and tranquil metaphysic of India unfolded”.

Here are some profound explanations restated from Coomaraswamy’s absorption of the Nataraja Tattva, the philosophy of the concept of the dancing Lord as seen in Śaivite literature. He mentions three Tāṇḍava-s, namely, the Sandhya Tāṇḍava that the Lord performs in twilight to the accompaniment of a divine orchestra with the Universal Mother admiring. The second is His Aghora Tāṇḍava in the cremation ground, and the third is the *Nāḍānta* Tāṇḍava at the Golden Hall of Chidambaram. Coomaraswamy explains the third one by translating many a Śaivite philosopher like Tirumoolar of yore and Umapathy Sivachariar of the post-14th Century. These Tamil saints had visualised and experienced the dance of Siva in their hearts and, out of mercy for the common man, tried to verbalise the indescribable, intangible truth. To summarise these profound thoughts is by no means an easy task. Such an attempt also tends to make a mockery of a colossally divine concept. Fully realising this limitation, let me try to recapture the glory of Coomaraswamy’s vision of the divine dance through a compilation of quotations from his writings.

- “Our Lord is the Dancer who, like the heat latent in firewood, diffuses His power in mind and matter, and makes them dance in their turn.”

- “The dance, in fact, represents His five activities (*Pañcakriyā*) — *Śṛṣṭi* (...creation), *Sthiti* (...preservation), *Samhāra* (destruction), *Tirōbhāva* (...illusion), and also *Anugraha* (...salvation).”
- “Creation arises from the drum; protection proceeds from the hand of hope; from fire proceeds destruction; the foot held aloft gives release.”
- “It will be observed that the fourth hand points to this lifted foot, the refuge of the soul.”

This is His dance; everywhere is God; that everywhere is the heart.

- “Siva is a destroyer. What does He destroy?...The fetters that bind each separate soul. Where is the burning ground?...The place where the ego is destroyed.”
- “...the dance of Siva is identified with the *Pañcākṣara* or five syllables of the prayer ‘*Śi-vā-ya-na-ma*’, hail to Siva...the arch over Sri Nataraja is *Ômkāra*.”

Coomaraswamy explains “arch” as matter, nature or *Prakṛti*. Siva dancing within and touching it with head, hands, and feet symbolises the universal omnipresent *Puruṣa* (spirit). He summarises the significance as three-fold — one, the image is the source of all movement within the cosmos represented by the arch; two, the purpose of dance is to give release from illusion; and three, the place is *Chidambaram*, the centre of the Universe within the heart. Coomaraswamy declares that the grandeur of this conception itself is a synthesis of science, religion and art.

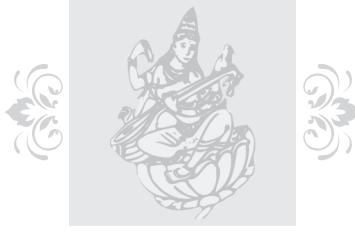
In recent decades, scientists have been exploring the parallels between modern physics and Eastern mysticism. Fritjof Kapra, in his *Tao of Physics*, included the photograph of Nataraja and acknowledged Coomaraswamy in the bibliography. He writes, “When the Ch’an monk Yun-men was asked ‘What is Tao?’, he answered simply, ‘Walk on!’. In the Chinese philosophy, the flowing and ever-changing reality is called “Tao” and is seen as a cosmic process in which all things are involved. Taoists say that one should not resist the flow but should adapt one’s actions to it”.

Kapra writes, “The discovery that mass is nothing but a form of energy has forced us to modify our concept of a particle in an essential way...particles are...but bundles of energy...the implication is that the nature of sub-atomic particles is intrinsically dynamic. To understand this better, we must remember that these particles can only be conceived in relativistic terms of a framework where space and time are fused into a four-dimensional continuum”. Further, Kapra says, “Siva, the cosmic dancer, is perhaps the most perfect personification of the dynamic universe. Through His dance, Siva sustains the manifold phenomena in the world, unifying all things by immersing them in His rhythm and making them participate in the dance — a magnificent image of the dynamic unity of the Universe”.

Coomaraswamy tells us the meaning of the arch around the figure of Nataraja. The *tiruvāsi* is more naturally the dance of nature (*Prakṛti*), contrasted with Siva's dance of wisdom. The first dance is action of matter and individual energy. This is *Ômkāra* of Kali. The other is dance of Siva, inseparable from *Ômkāra*. The first dance is impossible without Siva's will. The arch is *Prakṛti* and Siva dancing in it is *Puruṣa*. Between these stands the individual soul as "ya", as between "Siva" and "Nama". The fourth letter is *Caturtham* — the fourth dimension that Kapra talks about. *Turīyam* is limitless.

The *Naṭarājā* *Yantra*, which is nothing but a diagram of lines, is unobtrusively carved on the wall covered by a curtain in the altar of Nataraja in the Chidambaram temple. This is "Chidambara Rahasya", the secret. It is a representation of Siva and Sakti together in the *ākāśa*, the element of space. Chidambaram is the altar of Siva representing space, with four more exclusive temples for the other elements of the *Pañca Bhūta*, in South India. At Chidambaram, we see a synthesis of the worship of Form and Formlessness. While Nataraja is the tangible divinity, by His side, the *Rahasya* is hidden by the screen where the devotee visualises nothing but golden *vilva* garlands. Meditating needs a form, and if the meditator realises the metaphysical significance connecting form to the sound of *Praṇava*, he can merge in the cosmic space and time and realise his body mass to be the synthesis of matter and energy — the fourth dimension of the scientist. The nectar of cognisance that Coomaraswamy endowed through his essay on the dance of Siva has influenced not only the devotee, but also the scientists of modern atomic physics, who have been searching for the 'God' particle. It is most significant that a six-and-a-half-feet tall Nataraja is prominently placed in the campus of CERN (the European Center for Research in Particle Physics), in Geneva, Switzerland. This institute is the centre for the on-going research on the 'God' particle. It is also relevant that it was the Indian physicist Satyendra Nath Bose who was the originator of this theory. After spending several billions, scientists claim that they have neared the discovery of the 'God' particle, whereas in India, Coomaraswamy gave us free knowledge of this 'God' particle through his Dance of Siva, several decades ago.

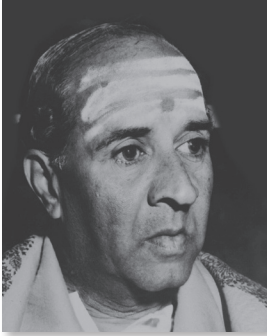




## **Saṅgīta Kalānidhi T.M. Thyagarajan** **A Centenary Tribute** **(28 May 1923 – 27 June 2007)**

**Saṅgīta Kalā Āchārya Dr. Ritha Rajan**

*Associate Director – Advanced School of Carnatic Music of The Music Academy &  
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**S**aṅgīta Kalānidhi T.M. Thyagarajan was a renowned Carnatic musician, endowed with multi-faceted musical excellences. Fondly called TMT by his colleagues and as TMT Sir by his disciples and younger musicians, T.M. Thyagarajan commanded great respect in the music world. He was a musician with a glorious ancestry and was the prime disciple of the grandsire of Carnatic music, Saṅgīta Kalānidhi Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer. He was a remarkable musician with sound musicianship, knowledge, skill and artistic sensitivity in music performance.

An acclaimed composer and tunesmith, he had many disciples, including some senior performing musicians. He was held in high esteem by his colleagues and senior musicians and was highly respected for his extensive repertoire.

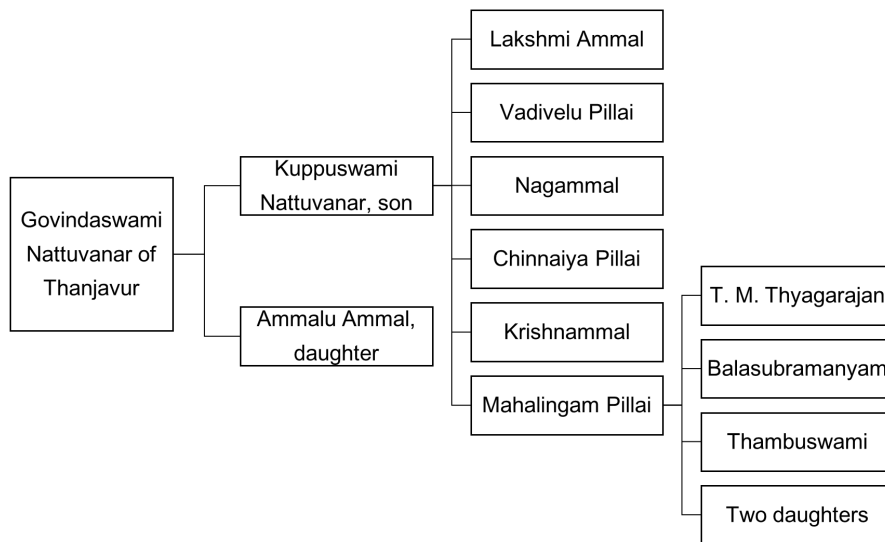
Though T.M. Thyagarajan always adhered to tradition, he had an admirable way of conscientiously balancing between tradition and innovation. He was also an excellent administrator and held important posts as professor and principal in reputed music conservatories.

### **T.M. Thyagarajan's ancestry**

T.M. Thyagarajan's ancestors were naṭṭuvanār-s and musicians at Thanjavur. His grandfather Kuppusami Pillai was a member of Kannusami Pillai's (a descendant of the Thanjavur Quartet) dance troupe which went from Thanjavur to Baroda (Vadodara) along with Rani

Chimna Bai (Lakshmi Bai) of Thanjavur, as part of her dowry, when she married Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaekwad III of Baroda. Descendants of Kuppusami Pillai are still living in Baroda, teaching Bharatanatyam and Carnatic music. They are called ‘Thanjāvurkar-s’.

## Genealogy of T.M. Thyagarajan



(Source: Extract from Inaugural Address at the Palghat Mani Iyer Memorial Art Centre on 8<sup>th</sup> October 1981 by S.Y. Krishnaswamy I.C.S., (Retd.), [historyofvadodara.in/bharatnatyam/](http://historyofvadodara.in/bharatnatyam/))

“Govindaswami Naṭṭuvanār of Thanjavur was a great dance-master, who demanded respect and regard from every quarter of music. Kuppuswami Naṭṭuvanār and Ammalu Ammal were the children of this Govindaswami Naṭṭuvanār. Kuppuswami was an expert in Bharatanatyam and mṛdaṅgam, who domiciled in Baroda Samasthānam, as the first naṭṭuvanār to go there from Thanjavur. Ankanna Naicker, the āsthāna mṛdaṅgist of Karvetnagar, was a disciple of Kuppuswami Naṭṭuvanār. The latter had six children – three boys and three girls. They were Lakshmi Ammal, Vadivelu Pillai, Nagammal, Chinnaiya Pillai, Krishnammal and Mahalingam Pillai, in that order.

“Vadivelu Pillai, a good mṛdaṅgist, spent almost all his life in Baroda. Nagammal was married to Vazhuvoor Manicka Naṭṭuvanar, the uncle and Guru of Vazhuvoor Ramaiya Pillai. Chinnaiya Pillai was a famous dance-master. Mahalingam Pillai was a good vocalist but an equally reputed mṛdaṅgist, whose son is Thanjavur M. Thyagarajan, the popular singer.”

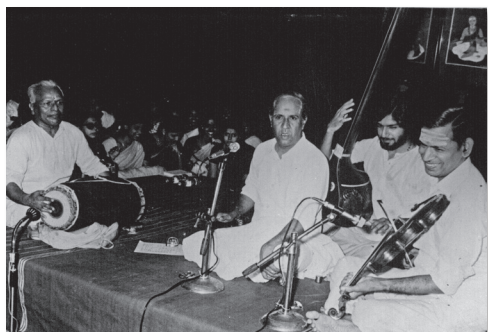
## The early days

As a child, Thyagarajan learnt Bharatanatyam and performed in female attire. Later, he joined the drama troupe of T.K. Shanmukham and acted in dramas like 'Pavaḷakkōḍi' where his musical skill was very much appreciated. T.K. Shanmukham himself has mentioned this in his autobiography.

The boy first learnt music from his father Mahalingam Pillai and performed his first stage concert at Thiruvaiyaru when he was only eight years old. The great Vidvān Pudukkottai Dakshinamurthi Pillai, who accompanied him on mṛdaṅgam, was delighted with the boy's performance. At the end of the concert, Dakshinamurthi Pillai took the boy in his arms and blessed him.

In 1941, Thyagarajan became a disciple of Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer and received advanced training under him. It was Thanjavur Vaidyanatha Iyer, the mṛdaṅgam maestro, who had suggested T.M. Thyagarajan, when Srinivasa Iyer asked him to find a good disciple for him. In about three years, the disciple mastered everything that was taught to him and started giving vocal support to his Guru.

At that time, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer who was the Principal of Swathi Tirunal Music Academy at Thiruvananthapuram, took T.M. Thyagarajan along with him. In Thiruvananthapuram, Srinivasa Iyer was entrusted with the tuning of Swathi Tirunal







Maharaja's kīrtana-s, towards which he devoted most of his time in the palace. It was T.M. Thyagarajan (TMT), who taught the students at the Swathi Tirunal Academy, when his Guru was away. Srinivasa Iyer would later listen to the kīrtana-s taught by Thyagarajan and give his approval.

In his concerts, Srinivasa Iyer also allowed TMT his share of niraval and svarakalpana. The kutcheri at Nattarasankottai in 1941 — where the disciple was introduced by the Guru — is even now remembered by connoisseurs. Soon, T.M. Thyagarajan started giving solo vocal concerts. In his early performances, his brothers T.M. Balasubramanyam and T.M. Thambusami accompanied him on the violin and the mṛdaṅgam respectively.

Interestingly, TMT also performed duo concerts with his Guru Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, Thiruvurur V. Namasivayam and co-disciple P.S. Narayanaswami.

T.M. Thyagarajan was a very successful teacher and administrator. In July 1962, he joined the then Central College of Carnatic Music. In 1972, he was promoted as professor and in 1974, he became the vice-principal of the college. In 1979, when the Government Music College at Madurai was started, T.M. Thyagarajan was appointed as its principal. He retired from service in 1981. He was awarded the Music Academy's Saṅgīta Kalānidhi birudu that year. This was followed by the Central Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1982. After retirement, he served as the Principal of the Music Academy's Teachers' College of Music. Vidvān-s Saṅgīta Kalānidhi K.V. Narayanaswami and Ramnad Krishnan, who were his colleagues at the Central College of Carnatic Music, became his close friends.

## **Salient features of TMT's music**

1. As mentioned earlier, although T.M. Thyagarajan was innovative in many musical areas, he would not let that come in the way of tradition that had been carried on for so many generations. According to K.S. Mahadevan, T.M. Thyagarajan believed that just as a written constitution was essential to a healthy social order, so a code of accepted standards to which everyone should conform, was vital to the art. For instance, TMT believed that svarakrama-s had to be faithfully adhered to in rendering rāga-s and svaraprastāra-s in order to capture faithfully the architecture as well as the bhāva of rāga-s and kṛti-s. He felt that the public had more knowledge and it was the duty of the musician to propagate classical and genuine rāga phrasings and thereby guide public taste along the correct channels.

2. T.M. Thyagarajan always followed the traditional concert format. Starting with mostly an Ādi tāla varṇam, rarely an Aṭa tāla varṇam, he would sing a few crisp kīrtana-s, some common some rare. Short rāga ālāpana-s with proportionate kīrtana-s, and niraval svara were presented. The major item was mostly a composition of the Trinity. After the mṛdaṅga solo, the Rāgam Tānam Pallavi would be sung in detail. Occasionally, he rendered jāvali-s and Meera bhajan-s towards the end.
3. T.M. Thyagarajan's repertoire was amazing, comprising both well-known and very rare compositions. It was he who popularised kīrtana-s like 'yārummaippōl ādarippavar' in Aṭhāṇā, composed by Srirangam Rangasami Kavirayar. TMT was probably the first to present the Tyagaraja kīrtana 'janakajāsamēta' in rāga Asāvēri in his concerts, and the credit goes to him for popularising this rare kīrtana.

Likewise, the rare Dikshitar kīrtana-s like 'Viśvanātham bhajēham' in rāga Naṭābharaṇam, 'Guruguhasvāminibhaktim' in rāga Bhānumati, and Syama Sastri's kīrtana 'nannubrōvarāda' in rāga Janarāṅjani were made familiar to the music world, only by T.M. Thyagarajan. Thus, he had a remarkable repertoire of well-known and less-known compositions of all major and minor composers. In fact, many rare kīrtana-s of Mysore Vasudevachar, like 'Śrīdhara pāhi' in rāga Jayantasēna, and rare kīrtana-s of Pallavi Sesha Iyer like 'entanivinavinturā' in rāga Ūrmikā were made popular by TMT. He would effortlessly present detailed rāga ālāpana and svara-singing even in these rare rāga-s.

Kīrtana-s of Neelakanta Sivan, Thiruvārur Ramasami Pillai and Tharangampadi Panchanada Iyer featured frequently in his concerts. There was always the audience request to sing either 'navasiddhipēṇālum' or 'tēruvadeppō neṅje' of Neelakanta Sivan towards the end of the concert. TMT also sang the compositions of contemporary composers like R. Venugopal.

4. T.M. Thyagarajan was an acclaimed tunesmith. He had set to tune many types of compositions which became very popular and were sought after — musicians like Saṅgīta Kalānidhi M.L. Vasanthakumari too included them in their concerts. He also set the music for Kalakshetra's dance-drama 'Murugantiruvārul'.

TMT had a special fondness for setting tunes to Narayana Tirtha's taraṅgam-s. The taraṅgam 'śaraṅambhavakarūṇāmayi', which he set to the rare rāga Hamsavinōdini, is perhaps the most popular one, and was sung often by M.L. Vasanthakumari. Rāga Hamsavinōdini takes the svara-s of Śaṅkarābharaṇa except pañcama and more or less resembles the Hindustani rāga Bhinnaṣaḍja. It is interesting to note that this taraṅgam 'śaraṅambhavakarūṇāmayi' is also sung by Andhra musicians in the earlier raga that it was composed in — rāga Dēvagāndhārī.



TMT tuned the taraṅgam ‘Nārāyaṇāya namō’ in the rare rāga Maddimarāvaḷī, with the mūrcana ‘s r g p d n ś – ś n d p g r s’, taking the svara-s of Hēmavati. The taraṅgam ‘maṅgaḷālaya’ is set in the rāga Viṇāvādinī with the scale ‘s r g p n ś – ś n p g r ṇ r s’, taking the svara-s of Harikāmbhōji. Another taraṅgam is set in the rare rāga Bhujāṅginī.

The famous Raṅjani rāgamalika of N.S. Chidambaram was set to music by T.M. Thyagarajan. He also set music to the kīrtana-s of Guru Surajananda, the most famous among them being ‘Muruganin marupeyar azhagu’ in raga Behāg.

In a rare venture, the lyrics for the Pūrvakalyāṇī rāga kīrtana ‘Śrīrājarājēsvarī’ in Ādi khaṇḍa naḍai was composed by Vidvān Thanjavur Sankara Iyer and the music was set by T.M. Thyagarajan.

TMT has set music to many Āzhvār pāsuraṁ-s, the most famous among them being ‘karpūram nārumō’ of Andal, which is interestingly divided into the sections pallavi, anupallavi and caraṇa, in the kīrtana format. The Periyazhvar pāsuraṁ ‘vaṇṇamāḍaṅgal.’ is also popular among musicians.

5. T.M. Thyagarajan was also a vāggēyakāra (composer) of great merit, he composed mostly in Tamil. There are about forty compositions, composed by him, as listed by Lakshman Ragade. He has composed varṇam-s, kīrtana-s, rāgamālīka and tillānā-s. The Tamil kīrtana ‘manamē unakku kāval’ is in Hindōḷa rāga with catuśruti dhaivata and the rāga name, is given as Varam. In M. Nadamuni Panditar’s ‘Saṅgīta-svara-prastāra-sāgaramu’, 1914, page 433 and in Rangaramanuja Iyengar’s ‘History of South Indian Music’, in the rāga index, under mēḷa 22, page 370, the rāga name Varam is given. It was T.M. Thyagarajan, who used the rāga name Varam or Varamu for the Hindōḷa rāga type with tīvra dhaivata.

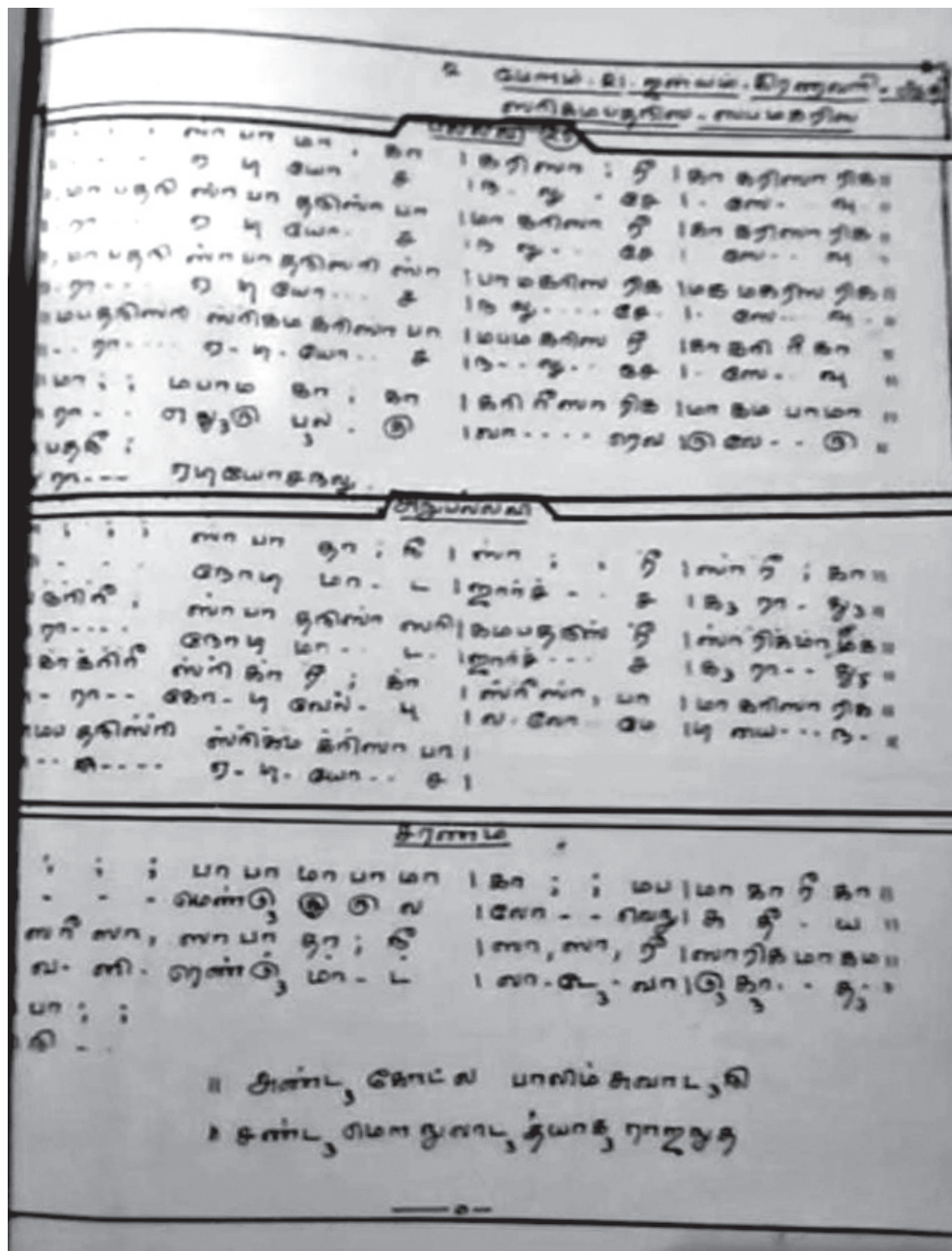
6. T.M. Thyagarajan published the book ‘Isai Malar Kottu’, Tamil sāhitya in 1974.

7. It would not be an exaggeration to state that after the Thanjavur Quartet, it was T.M. Thyagarajan, who composed ciṭṭasvara-s for kīrtana-s, embedded with laya patterns. Vidvān Lalgudi Jayaraman later followed TMT’s style.

Earlier ciṭṭasvara-s composed for Tyagaraja kīrtana-s and Patnam Subramanya Iyer kīrtana-s were in the sarvalaghu style with a free flow, as in the famous ciṭṭasvara-s like,

‘R gmrsṇP.p.rsRgmR.....’ for the Pūrṇacandrika rāga kīrtana ‘telisirāmacintanātō’ of Tyagaraja,

## TMT's handwritten notation



‘R,rgmpgmpDdpmGmR-grsNrsnD,.....’ for the Sahānā rāga kīrtana ‘ṭvasudhā nivaṇṭi daivamu’ of Tyagaraja,

‘mgmpdpdNndpd.....’ for the Bēgaḍa rāga kīrtana ‘manasunaneranammiti’ of Patnam Subramanya Iyer.

(The ciṭṭasvara for Patnam Subramanya Iyer’s kīrtana in Kathanakutūhalam was added by a later musician.)

In the kīrtana-s of the Thanjavur Quartet, for the first time, ciṭṭasvara-s have been composed with laya patterns as in the Kīravāṇi rāga kīrtana ‘bhaktapālana’.

Similarly, T.M. Thyagarajan has composed ciṭṭasvara-s with laya patterns. The ciṭṭasvara that he has composed for Patnam Subramanya Iyer’s Pūrṇacandrika rāga kīrtana ‘nējēsinaneramū’ can be cited as a good example.

His setting of saṅgati-s for kīrtana-s was also unique as can be seen in his own compositions.

8. T.M. Thyagarajan presented rare versions of kīrtana-s, niraval renditions and Rāgam Tānam Pallavi.

He was the only musician, who sang Tyagaraja’s Nīlāmbārī rāga kīrtana ‘nīkēdayarāka’ in Tīśra Tripuṭa tāḷa, like a Kshetrāyā padam. The common version of this kīrtana is in Mīśra Cāpu tāḷa.

He was the first musician to have sung niraval for a Darbār rāga kīrtana. Usually only svara-s are sung for kīrtana-s in Darbār. His niraval for the anupallavi of the Tyagaraja kīrtana ‘Nāradagurusvāmī’ reveals high scholarship, efficiency and challenge.

His rendering of Tyagaraja’s kīrtana ‘ētāvunanērcitivō’ in Yadukula Kāmbhōji is very striking with an unusually slow kālapramāṇa.

He was also the first musician to have attempted niraval for a pallavi theme while singing the tīśra gati, after prathama and dvitīya kālā-s. He could do it fluently and effortlessly.

In viruttam singing, he added rāga-s like Lalitā, which was a novelty.

He presented Rāgam Tānam Pallavi in common as well as in uncommon rāga-s. His pallavi-s, in viḷamba kāla khaṇḍa naḍai, were very challenging and won the appreciation of all the musicians.

9. His bāṇi or style: T.M. Thyagarajan was a natural musician, who did not follow his Guru’s style or that of any other musician. He sang very naturally and did not

attempt to integrate styles or try to bring in voice modulation as musicians normally do. He sang in his natural voice. His genuine admiration for Saṅgīta Kalānidhi G.N. Balasubramaniam in his younger days, did not come in the way of his natural way of singing.

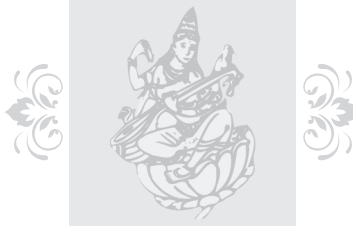
T.M. Thyagarajan had many disciples. Rajalakshmi Sekar, the Trichy Sisters Prema and Jaya, Mangalam Shankar, O.S. Thyagarajan, Sridhar Nilakantan, Gowri Gokul, Lakshmi Rangarajan, Kuzhikkarai Viswalingam, S. Seetharaman, E. Gayatri, M. Narmada, Raji Gopalakrishnan, Nirmala Sundararajan and Subhashini Parthasarathy are some of the torchbearers of the TMT tradition.

As rightly said by K.S. Mahadevan, in his article on T.M. Thyagarajan, in the Music Academy Souvenir 1981: “Even his opponents will not grudge him credit for his intellectual honesty and courage”.

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## Pallavi-s in Three of the 108 Tāla-s (Vilōkita, Pārvatilōcana and Miśravarṇa)

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There are more than 1000 rāga-s in our Carnatic music system. Likewise, there are approximately 300 tāla-s which occupy a special place in Carnatic music. We know that at one point of time in the history of music, these tāla-s were in vogue. There have been many tāla groups, namely, the 108 tāla-s, Aṣṭagana tāla-s, Nava-Saṁdhi tāla-s, 35 tāla-s, 72 Mēlakarta tāla-s and so on. Largely, the 35 tāla-s based on the Sapta tāla-s (Dhruva, Maṭya, Rūpaka, Jhampa, Tripuṭa, Aṭa and Ēka) are the only tāla-s in practice now. The other tāla-s from the other groups are used sparingly to present certain musical forms like the Rāgam Tānam Pallavi. History tells us that Syama Sastri had used the Śarabanandana tāla, and Bobbili Kesavayya the Siṁhanandana tāla to present pallavi-s.

Ramasvami Dikshitar, the illustrious father of Muthusvami Dikshitar, had composed a ‘108 Rāga-Tāla-Mālikā’. The notation of the rāga-tāla-mālikā is given in the Saṅgīta Sampradāya Pradarśini of Subbarama Dikshitar. It contains 61 rāga-s and 61 tāla-s, though it has been named as the ‘108 Rāga-Tāla-Mālikā’. This rāga-tāla-mālikā, wherein nearly 50 tāla-s from the 108 tāla group mentioned earlier have been handled, is one of the ancient compositional sources given with notation for these tāla-s from the 108 tāla group. We get to know that Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer has composed a tillāna in Siṁhanandana tāla in Kānada rāga, and Ramanathapuram Srinivasa Iyengar has composed a tillāna in Lakṣmīśa tāla in Kāpi rāga. There are a few more compositions by some composers in these rare tāla-s.

Although, all the 108 tāla-s are given in a few books with the aṅga-s specified, it has not reached the public or the professional musicians of today. Therefore, it is my objective to bring to view all the 108 tāla-s by way of composing pallavi-s in them. It is a fervent hope that musicians and students can look into this and start utilizing these tāla-s in their concerts or can compose other compositions using these tāla-s.

The history of the 108 tāḷa-s is given in the Nāṭya Śāstra, mentioning the Mārga and Dēśī tāḷa-s. The count of Dēśī tāḷa-s differs from book to book. The 'Pañcha Marabu', explains the 108 tāḷa-s with verses and this book has been taken as the basis for the 108 tāḷa-s.

The Aṣṭotraśata Tālākṣaṇa, a Sanskrit book, has been taken alongside for a comparison of the aṅga-s and tāḷa names, which have been presented based on the comparison.

The 6 aṅga-s involved in the 108 Tālā group are,

Anu Drutam	:	U	:	1	Akśara
Drutam	:	O	:	2	Akśara-s
Laghu	:	l	:	4	Akśara-s
Guru	:	S	:	8	Akśara-s
Plutam	:	Š	:	12	Akśara-s
Kākapādam	:	+	:	16	Akśara-s

The method of rendering the aṅga-s are:

Anu Drutam	:	1 beat
Drutam	:	1 beat and 1 wave
Laghu	:	1 beat with 3 finger counts
Guru	:	1 beat with movement of the hand with closed fist in a horizontal clockwise movement with 7 pauses in the movement
Plutam	:	1 beat (4 counts), left wave (4 counts) and right wave (4 counts)
Kākapādam	:	1 beat (4 counts), left wave (4 counts), right wave (4 counts) and an up-wave (4 counts)

Since rendition of these latter three aṅga-s are difficult, these tāḷa-s may have gone out of vogue.

The tāḷa-s I have taken are:

1. Vilōkita
2. Pārvatīlōcana
3. Mīśravarṇa
4. As per the Pañcha Marabu book, the sequence number of these tāḷa-s are given as Vilōkita (103), Pārvatīlōchana (98) and Mīśravarṇa (29).

While composing the pallavi in these tāḷa-s, an attempt has been made to include the tāḷa name in the first two tāḷa-s.

## Āṅga-s and Pallavi details of the Three Tāḷa-s

### VILŌKITA

Āṅga-s and Akśara-s :

1    S    O    -    O    Š  
4    8    2    -    2    12 = 28 Akśara-s

Sāhitya : Trilōkavilōkitalīlāṁgōpālamkalayāmi

Rāga : Tōḍi

Eḍuppu : 3/4

Arudi count : 7

, , , d n , ś ś ś , n d d n | ś ; ; ; d n d p m g u || g , m  
Tṛi lō ka vi lō ki ta lī lam gō pā lam ka la yā mi  
1 2 1 1 2 1 1 2 7 2 2 1 1 1 2 1

### PĀRVATĪLŌCANA

Āṅga-s and Akśara-s:

O O 1 1 O O S S 1 1 1 - 1 S 1 1  
2 2 4 4 2 2 8 8 4 4 4 - 4 8 4 4 = 64 Akśara-s

Sāhitya :

Pārvatīlōcanacakōracāndrā suguṇasāndrākaruṇākara śaṅkara paramēśvara satatam māmpāhi

Rāga : Śankarābharāṇa

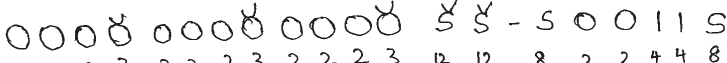
Eḍuppu : 1/2

Arudi count : 9

, p , m g , u , ś n ś u , ś d ṇ ś ; ś u g m u g ;  
Pāṇ va tī lō ca na ca kō sa can dṛā su gu na sān dṛā  
2 1 2 2 1 1 1 2 1 2 3 1 1 1 2 3  
g m p , m p , ś , n d p m p d , n | ś ; ; ;  
ka su nā ka nā saṇ ka sū pa sa mē śva śā  
1 1 2 1 2 2 1 2 1 1 2 1 9  
ś n d p , m g u ś u g || m  
sa ta tam mām pā hī  
1 1 3 3 2 2  
(1+1)

# MIŚRAVARṆA

Aṅga-s and Akśara-s:


  
 2 2 2 3 2 2 2 3 2 2 2 3 12 12 8 2 2 4 4 8 = 79 Akśara-s

Sāhitya :

Padaśārasamu neranammiti rāmāsīrāmā sītārāmākōdaṇḍarāmā vēgamēvaccinaṇnubrōvarā

Rāga : Mukhāri

Eduppu : 1/2

Arudi count : 10

ॐ p d ś, n d p; m g ś, g ś; ś, m; m g ś m, p;  
 Pa da śa śa mu ne śa nam mi thi śā mā śā mā  
 1 1 2 1 1 3 1 1 2 1 3 2 3 3 2 3

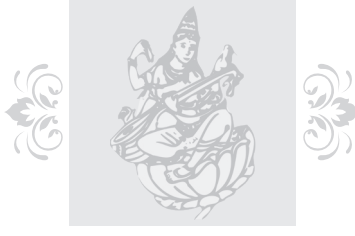
p m p, p, ndm p, m p n nd, pd, | ś, j j j j; ś; g, ś,  
 śī tā śā mā kē dañ da śā mā vē ga mē  
 2 2 2 3 3 2 3 3 10 3 2 2

ś n d p m g ś ś, ś m ||,  
 vac ai nañ nu bro va śā  
 2 2 2 1 2 1 2

(1+1)







## Compositions of Subbaraya Sastri An Analysis

Saṅgīta Kalā Āchārya Rama Ravi & Dr. Nanditha Ravi  
*Carnatic vocalists and teachers*

### Life and Biography

Subbaraya Sastri (Subbarāya Śāstri), a composer of repute of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, belongs to an illustrious musical lineage. He is the worthy son of the great composer, Syama Sastri. However, the available literature on the life and contribution of these composers is very limited, and all the more in the case of Subbaraya Sastri. Some substantial information about these composers can be gathered from the book titled, “Great Composers” written by Prof. P. Sambamoorthy, a renowned musicologist of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. As per records, the ancestors of Syama Sastri hailed from the Kambam region and were known as Kambattar. Later, they moved to Kanchipuram, the city of temples, and the abode of Goddess Baṅgāru (Golden) Kamakshi. It is said that Adi Sankaracharya, during his tour to holy places, visited Kanchipuram and renovated the Bangaru Kamakshi temple there, which was in a dilapidated condition. He then appointed the ancestors of Syama Sastri as hereditary temple arcakā-s (priests).

Due to political unrest, these arcakā-s left Kanchipuram. To safeguard the golden idol, they carried the Bangaru Kamakshi with them, reached Tiruvarur, the birthplace of Tyagaraja, and installed it in the Tiruvarur temple. Syama Sastri was also born in Tiruvarur.

Again, due to unfavourable political circumstances, Syama Sastri’s father Visvanatha Iyer left Tiruvarur and finally relocated to Thanjavur, a place that was ruled then by King Tulajaji, who was not only Visvanatha Iyer’s benefactor but also helped him in building a temple for Bangaru Kamakshi. It was in Thanjavur that Subbaraya Sastri was born in 1803.

Subbaraya Sastri was the second son of Syama Sastri, the elder being Panju Sastri who had two wives. Through his first, he had three sons namely, Ramakrishna Sastri, Sambasiva Sastri

and Annasvami Sastri. Since Subbaraya Sastri had no male issues, he adopted Annasvami Sastri — the youngest son of Panju Sastri. While Panju Sastri took over the hereditary responsibilities of the temple, Subbaraya Sastri took to music and other academic pursuits. He gained mastery over Telugu, Sanskrit, and Tamil, coupled it with vigorous training in music from his own father Syama Sastri, and later trained under the great composer Tyagaraja. He was proficient in playing the violin and an instrument called the sariṇḍā. It is believed that he drew large crowds whenever he played the latter instrument.

Thus, it can be observed that Subbaraya Sastri hailed from a very rich spiritual cum musical lineage that was imbued with the classicism of the highest order, having guru-s such as his own father Syama Sastri, and none other than the master composer Tyagaraja.

If the merit of a composer is to be weighed only with reference to the number or the popularity of his compositions, Subbaraya Sastri can lay no claim to either. Unlike his great guru-s, neither does he have numerous compositions to his credit, nor a long śiṣya paramparā to popularize his creations. In spite of these limitations, that he has been ranked amongst the *uttama* (superior) *vāggēyakāra*-s of yesteryears, speaks volumes for the value and merit of each of his compositions in very clear terms. In the following paragraphs, we will see how he has enriched the Carnatic music repertoire with his priceless gems of compositions.

## Subbaraya Sastri's contribution

As mentioned earlier, Subbaraya Sastri does not have many compositions to his credit. About 12 compositions have been listed in the published versions of music text books. All his compositions are in Telugu<sup>1</sup>. The language is simple and lucid. He has signed his compositions with the *mudrā* (signature), 'Kumāra'. It is said that he perhaps chose this *mudrā* owing to his birth star, *Krittika*, which is associated with Lord Subramaṇya or Kumara Perumal.

As far as we know, Subbaraya Sastri does not seem to have attempted various musical forms like *Varṇam*-s, *Svarajati*-s, and *Tillānā*-s. He has only composed *kṛti*-s that too in the usual format having the sections *Pallavi*, *Anupallavi*, and *Carāṇam*<sup>2</sup>.

1 Except for one in *rāga Vasantā*, which is in Tamil, and whose authorship is under debate. This is discussed later on.

2 If any exception is to be pointed out, it is that he has composed a piece in the *kīrtana* format, that is, a musical form with the section *Pallavi* followed by a number of *carāṇa*-s, all having the same *Dātu* (tune). Example: *Dalacinavāru* — *Dhanyāsi* — *Ādi*. The musical format resembles the *Divyanāma* and *Utsava Sampradāya kṛti*-s of Tyagaraja.

## List of Subbaraya Sastri's compositions

Sr. No	Title	Rāga	Tāla
1.	Dalacinavāru	Dhanyāsi	Ādi
2.	Ēmaninnē	Mukhāri	Ādi
3.	Janani ninnuvina	Ritigauḷa	Miśra Cāpu
4.	Mīnanayana	Darbār	Rūpakam
5.	Nannu brōcuṭaku	Tōḍi	Ādi
6.	Ninnu sēvincina	Yadukula Kāmbhōji	Miśra Cāpu
7.	Ninnuvinaṅgatigāna	Kalyāṇi	Ādi
8.	Śaṅkari nīvē	Bēgaḍa	Rūpakam
9.	Śrī Kamalāmbikē	Tōḍi	Rūpakam
10.	Śrī Kāmākṣi	Vasantā	Ādi
11.	Vanajāsana	Śrī	Rūpakam
12.	Veṅkaṭaśaila vihāra	Hamīr Kalyāṇi	Ādi

However, the veteran musicologist, Prof. P. Sambamoorthy states that a few more of Subbaraya Sastri's compositions are available in manuscripts that were in the possession of the descendants of the family.

## Content / Theme

Subbaraya Sastri's compositions are mainly in praise of Dēvī (Goddess) or Amba, and portray the sentiment of compassion (karuṇārasa) – pleading with the Goddess to shower Her compassion on him. In this respect, Subbaraya Sastri has truly followed his father and guru Syama Sastri, whose compositions reflect this sentiment in ample measure. As is well known, Syama Sastri was an ardent devotee of Goddess Kamakshi and, we find this sentiment of bhakti and compassion as the undertone in all his compositions. As an illustration, one of Syama Sastri's kṛti-s that expresses the sentiment of karuṇārasa is given below:

## Ninnē namminānu – Tōḍi – Miśra Cāpu

In this kṛti (in the pallavi) “Ninnē namminānu sadā nāvinnapamuvini nannubrōvumu” he expresses, “Dēvi! I always believe in you. Please heed my prayers and protect me.” Similarly, we find the use of the phrase “Kannatalligādā biḍḍayani kanikaraminthainalēdā, Ambā” that occurs in the anupallavi of the kṛti, meaning to say, “Ambā! Are you, not my mother? Don't you have mercy on your child?,” which brings out the composer's plea to the Goddess to shower him with Her compassion.

Subbaraya Sastri follows in the same vein, in most of his compositions. To illustrate, presented below are two such compositions:

**a. Nannu brōcuṭaku — Tōḍi — Ādi**

Nannu brōcuṭaku tāmasamēla Ambā Kāmākṣammā

“O! Mother Kamakshi! Why is this tarrying to protect me? Why this delay?”

**b. Janani ninnuvinā — Ritigauḷa — Mīśra Cāpu**

The following phrase, “Janani ninnuvinā dikkevarammā jagamulōṇagāna” in the pallavi, means, “O Goddess! Mother of the three worlds, who else other than you is there to take care of me on this earth.” and, “manasijamānasa sammōdinivinavē nāmanavinivini nannubrōvumu” in the anupallavi, means, “You who fascinated the heart of Cupid, please pay heed to my entreaties and protect me”, express the same sentiment of compassion.

Thus, this kind of emotional appeal forms the key tone of expressions of the father and the son in their kṛti-s.

## The musical style

The musical approach of Subbaraya Sastri reflects that of his father very closely and we may even go to the extent of saying that it is a replica of his father’s. His kṛti-s are replete with rāga bhāva and the music is highly nuanced. The musical variations occurring in his kṛti-s, especially in viḷamba kālam (slow tempo), are oriented more toward the musical phenomenon, gamakam. In other words, this type of variation which is gamakam-based, involving tonal variations, modulations, and subtle nuances in-between tones — such as shakes (kampitam), glides (jāru), etc. — requires to be observed keenly and with a discerning ear. Such a nuance-based musical approach forms an important distinguishing feature of the styles of Syama Sastri and Subbaraya Sastri from that of others. The kṛti-s Nannu brōcuṭaku and Śrī Kamalāmbikē in Tōḍi of Subbaraya Sastri stand as good examples modeled on such musical subtleties.

While Subbaraya Sastri closely follows the style and the content of his father’s kṛti-s, he has abstained himself with respect to one or two musical aspects. These are about the handling of rāga-s and tāla-s. While Syama Sastri, not as prolific a composer as his contemporaries Tyagaraja and Muthusvami Dikshitar, has attempted compositions in rare rāga-s like Kalgaḍa, Cintāman, Ī, and Māñji, Subbaraya Sastri has none such to his credit. He has confined himself to more common rāga-s (essentially rakti rāga-s). In fact, even rāga-s like Sāvērī and Bhairavī are not found in his list. Surprisingly, even the rāga Ānanda

Bhairavī, which is acclaimed as the most favourite rāga of his father Syama Sastri, is absent from the list of his compositions.

Another aspect that Subbaraya Sastri has stood apart from that of his father, pertains to tāla. With respect to the laya aspect of music, Syama Sastri is hailed as a pioneer in introducing new ideas and concepts in the realm of tāla. For instance, he is accredited with introducing the Vilōma Cāpu Krama (Miśra Cāpu tāla rendered in the reverse order, that is, 4 + 3 in place of the usual 3 + 4 format). Talli ninnu in rāga Kalyāṇi, Ninnuvinaṅga in rāga Pūrvikalyāṇi, Mīnalōcana brōva in rāga Dhanyāsi are a few examples of kṛti-s in the Vilōma Krama of Miśra Cāpu tāla. Syama Sastri has also introduced a few intricate laya patterns in his compositions. In contrast, Subbaraya Sastri has stuck to independent lines. He has composed kṛti-s in simple and common tāla-s namely Ādi, Rūpakam, and Miśra Cāpu, and has made use of relatively straightforward laya expositions.

## Influence of the Music Trinity

Subbaraya Sastri had the good fortune to come under the influence of all the members of the illustrious Music Trinity – “Saṅgīta Mummūrtigal” as they are called in Tamil). This influence is well reflected in his compositions. The development of various musical forms in general, and kṛti-s in particular, attained its peak during the period of the Musical Trinity, and the subsequent periods – the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. This development brought in newer ideas by way of enriching a composition either from the musical angle or the lyrical side, or both. These are the additional sections added to a kṛti termed decorative aṅga-s like, Saṅgati-s, Svāra Sāhityam, and Madhyama Kālam, to name a few. We will now observe how Subbaraya Sastri has dexterously introduced some of these aṅga-s in his kṛti-s, following the model of his great mentors namely, the Trinity – the Trendsetters of Modern Classical Carnatic Music.

Illustrated below are examples of a few decorative aṅga-s occurring in Subbaraya Sastri's kṛti-s, drawing a parallel to each one of them, from the kṛti-s of the Trinity:

1. **Saṅgati-s** : Saṅgati-s are important musical features found in Carnatic music. The credit for introducing this feature goes to the great master, Tyagaraja. Saṅgati-s may be described as variations pertaining to a musical theme. In other words, these are variations in svāra phrases, constituting the arrangement or succession of svāra groupings, in a graded manner. They are generally introduced in a stepwise progression, one leading to the next in a logical manner. Saṅgati-s are mainly used to highlight the rāga bhāva or the saṅcara-s of a rāga, in an interesting and appealing manner. All the same, they are used at times to focus on the sāhitya content of a particular composition. In short, the addition of musical variations

to a given musical theme, enriches the value of the musical composition, thereby enhancing listening pleasure.

Subbaraya Sastri has introduced this feature, Saṅgati, in his kṛti-s. The kṛti-s Śaṅkari nīvē in Bēgaḍa and Mīnanayana in Darbār are good examples that demonstrate his skill in handling this technical beauty. To bring out the similarities between Subbaraya Sastri and Tyagaraja in the art of introducing saṅgati-s, in a graded manner, the kṛti Mīnanayana in Darbār of Subbaraya Sastri and the kṛti Yōcana kamalalōcana of Tyagaraja in the same rāga are given hereunder:

### Mīnanayana – Darbār – Rūpakam – Subbaraya Sastri

#### Pallavi:

1	; s ṇ S - R S R Mī na na ya na	G; G; s R s Nī vu
2	r r s ṇ S - R S R Mī na na ya na	G; G; s R s Nī . . vu . .
3	r r s ṇ S - R S R Mī na na ya na	P; p m R g g r s Nī vu
4	r r s ṇ S - R S R Mī na na ya na	r m P p m R g g r s Nī vu
5	r r s ṇ S - R S R Mī na na ya na	r m p D d p m r g r s Nī vu
6	r r s ṇ S - R S R Mī na na ya na	p m p d p d m p r g r s Nī vu
7	r r s ṇ S - R S R Mī na na ya na	N, d p m\ G, g r s Nī vu
8	r r s ṇ S - R S R Mī na na ya na	ṛ ś n ś p d m p r g r s Nī vu
9	r r s ṇ S - R S R Mī na na ya na (Nā mīda karuṇa jūḍavamma)	ṛ ś n ś p d m p r g r s Nī vu nā

**Yōcana Kamalalōcana – Darbār – Ādi – Tyagaraja****Pallavi:**

<b>1</b>	; R P M P ; ; ; Yō ca nā	p m d p p m R . . . . .	G G r s R ka ma la
	; p m R G R ; S ; Lō ca nā	; d p p m d p na nnu brō	p m R G G va in ka
<b>2</b>	r s R P p m p D p - r m p d Yō ca nā . . . . .	r m p d p m R . . . . .	G G r s R ka ma la
	; p m R G R ; S ; Lō ca nā	; d p p m d p na nnu brō	p m R G G va in ka
<b>3</b>	r s R P p m p D p - m p d n Yō ca nā . . . . .	r m p d p m R . . . . .	G G r s R ka ma la
	; m p d p m r G R ; S ; Lō ca nā	; d p m p D n d na nnu brō	P d p m r G G va in ka
<b>4</b>	r s R P p m p D p - m p d n Yō ca nā . . . . .	Ś - d d p m R . . . . .	G G r s R ka ma la
	; m p d p m r G R ; S ; Lō ca nā	; d p m p D n d na nnu brō	P d p m r G G va in ka
<b>5</b>	r s R P p m p D p - m p d n Yō ca nā . . . . .	ś ř - ġ ġ ř ś - n ś . . . . .	d p m r g g r s ... ka ma la
	R - m p d p m r G R ; S ; Lō ca nā	ř Ś ř n ś - d p nan nu brō	, d m p - m r g g va in ka
	r s (Yōcana)		

2. **Svara Sāhityam** : This is one of the decorative aṅga-s which has been widely handled by Subbaraya Sastri. He has composed Svara Sāhityam for almost all his compositions. In this he has followed his father who is known to have excelled in the art of Svara Sāhityam – examples are Ō! Jagadamba in Ānanda Bhairavi and Durusuga in Sāvērī. Svara Sāhityam constitutes two parts – the Ciṭṭasvaram part, and the Sāhityam corresponding to the ciṭṭasvaram. In other words, for the ciṭṭasvaram section, an

appropriate sāhityam is added in keeping with the sentiments expressed in the composition. This resultant technical appendage is termed ‘Svara Sāhityam’. Normally, the ciṭṭasvaram passage is sung after the anupallavi section, and the sāhityam for the ciṭṭasvaram is sung after the caraṇam.

An example to illustrate the use of Svara Sāhityam:

**Śaṅkari nīvē – Bēgaḍā – Rūpakam**

R ; ; ; S ; Śrī Kāñ	; ; r ṇ ḍ p s s g r ci sa da na su ra sa na
G ; ; ; M ; rā kā	; ; d p m p g R s śa śi va da na rā vē
S r ṇ ḍ p – s ṇ r s g r Kō ki la ni bha mru du la ga da na	G m p d p ś n ṛ ś – m ḡ kō ri na va ra mu lo sa gi pu ḍu
ṛ Ś ṛ n d p M p g r pa rā ku sa lu pa rā du bhā ra	S – ṛ n d p M, g r s mā pa ra ma kru pā ni dhi vi

It is interesting to note that Subbaraya Sastri has brought in another technical beauty, known as ‘Svarākṣaram’, which involves both svaram and sāhityam. In the Svara Sāhityam of the kṛti Ēma ninnē – Mukhārī – Ādi, one observes Svarākṣara beauty – both Śuddha and Sucīta svarākṣara-s may be noticed here. It is elucidated below (the Svarākṣara portion is highlighted):

**Ēma ninnē – Mukhārī – Ādi – Subbaraya Sastri**

**Svara Sāhityam:**

R ; ; R g s r s ṇ ḍ p ḍ Rā Kēn du va da na vi nu mi ka	S ; ; - s r nī sa ri	g S ṇ ḍ P ṁ ga dei va mu gā na
P ḍ ; S . . . . Pa dāb ja		

3. **Madhyama Kālam :** This decorative aṅga essentially pertains to the sāhitya part of a kṛti. When the sāhitya syllables or words are tightly packed in a given line or Āvartanam, it gives the impression of the line being executed in a faster tempo or Madhyama Kālam. This is termed ‘Madhyama Kāla Sāhityam’. In fact, there is very little scope for lengthy musical or vowel extensions like akāra/ukāra-s.



The term Madhyama kāla sāhityam immediately brings to mind Muthusvami Dikshitar, who is hailed as the pioneer of this model of kṛti-s. Inspired by the great composer, Subbaraya Sastri has tagged this feature to his kṛti-s, thereby adding charm and colour to them.

Here are three kṛti-s of Subbaraya Sastri that have the Madhyama Kālam feature:

- a. Śaṅkari nīvē – Bēgaḍā – Rūpakam
- b. Vanajāsana – Śrī – Rūpakam
- c. Śrī Kamalāmbikē – Tōḍi – Rūpakam

Here is an illustration of Madhyama Kālam in the kṛti Vanajāsana:

The kriti **Vanajāsana** will illustrate the use of Madhyama Kālam

ḡ ṛ Ś – ṛ ś N – ś n P || p n ś n – p m r r G r s ||

I la lō pa la nī va la nē ga la dā . Śrī . La li tām bi kē (**Vanajāsana**)

So far, it has been observed how Subbaraya Sastri has beautifully introduced some decorative aṅga-s in his kṛti-s, following the model of the Trinity. There are certain other areas too in which the influence of the Trinity can be felt; these will be elaborated in the following sections.

## Kṣētra kṛti-s of Subbaraya Sastri

As we know, Muthusvami Dikshitar was a wide traveler. During his travels, he visited temples in different places (kṣētra-s), and composed innumerable kṛti-s on the deities of those kṣētra-s. Vivid descriptions of the kṣētra, the deity, the temple, and any special feature pertaining to the kṣētra can be found in his kṛti-s.

Subbaraya Sastri may not have traveled as extensively as Muthusvami Dikshitar but he visited a few places and composed kṛti-s on the deities of the kṣētra-s.

The first kṣētra he visited was Madurai where he composed the beautiful kṛti **Mīnanayana** in rāga Darbār set to Rūpaka tāla. Like Dikshitar, he has introduced the kṣētra mudrā (a word or a phrase that alludes to the name of the place) that occurs in the caraṇam of the kṛti – **Madurānagaranivāsini**, **Madhukaitabhabhanjani**, **Amba**. Interestingly, his father Syama Sastri was also known to have visited Madurai and composed the Navaratnamālikā on Goddess Meenakshi.

The next kṣētra that Subbaraya Sastri visited was Tiruvaiyaru in Thanjavur district. He composed the kriti **Ninnuvinaṁ gatigāna** on Goddess Dharmasamvardhani. A mention of the Goddess's name occurs in the opening line of the kṛti itself – *Ninnuvinaṁ gatigāna jagāna vanaruhākṣi Dharmasamvardhani kāma sammardini*. There is an interesting episode about this kṛti. When Subbaraya Sastri composed this kṛti in Kalyāṇī, he wanted his guru Tyagaraja to hear it and bless him. Accepting his invitation, Tyagaraja came to the Tiruvaiyaru temple where he listened to the debut presentation of this masterly composition with a svara sāhityam appendage. The manner in which the gamakavarika, rāgarāṇjaka prayōga-s and pañcamavarja prayōga-s have been handled in this kṛti, moved Tyagaraja to the extent of appreciating the creative abilities of Subbaraya Sastri. Tyagaraja conveyed the same and showered his immense blessings on his disciple.

Subbaraya Sastri's travels led him next to Kanchipuram<sup>3</sup> (*Nagarēṣu Kāñcī* city of cities) where he composed two masterpieces, *Śaṅkari nīvē*, and *Ēma ninnē*. In the former, the kṣētra mudrā can be found in the svara sāhityam – *Śrī Kāñcī sadana surasana Rākāśaśivadana rāve*; so too in the latter, the mudrā occurs in the caraṇam of the kṛti – *Vara Kāñcīpurālayavāsini*.

Subbaraya Sastri's visits to Tirupati and finally to Chennai (erstwhile Madras) – where he stayed for about 12 years – have rewarded us with two magnificent compositions. At Tirupati, he composed the kriti **Veṅkaṭaśaṭa vihāra** dedicated to the Lord Venkateswara in rāga Hamīrkalyāṇī set to Ādi tāla. One notices the influence of Muthusvami Dikshitar here, who is known to have adopted Hindustani rāga-s to the Carnatic music system and composed a few kṛti-s in them like Parimaḷa Ranganātham in rāga Hamīrkalyāṇī, Akhilandesvari and Ceta Śrī Bālakṛṣṇam in rāga Dvijāvanti (Jaijāvanti).

During his stay in Chennai, Subbaraya Sastri composed yet another gem of a kṛti on Lord Parthasarathi of Triplicane, **Ninnu sēvincina** in rāga Yadukulakāmbhōji set to Mīśra Cāpu tāla. The Lord's name occurs in the anupallavi of the kṛti – *Kanakāṅgi Śrī Rukmiṇi hr̥dayābja dinamāṇē Pārthasārathī Svāmi*.

## Ambiguity in Authorship

Ambiguity in authorship is not something uncommon in our musical history. As is well known, all our Indian traditions – musical, cultural, and other – have been passed on from one generation to the other, essentially through oral transmission, even until the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Written records are either absent or scanty. Thus, the lack of proper written material is basically the cause for all such ambiguities.

3 As evidence of his visit to Kāñcīpuram, it is said that his signature was found in the government district records.

As for the kṛti, Śrī Kāmākṣī — Vasantā — Ādi, Sangita Kalanidhi the late Dr. T. Viswanathan (Professor and Head of the Department of Music, Madras University, and one of the grandsons of the illustrious Vina Dhanammal), has published this kṛti with notation, in the journal of the Music Academy, 1953, mentioning it as a Tamil composition of Subbaraya Sastri. Again, Saṅgīta Kalānidhi T.K. Govinda Rao, a great musician-cum-researcher of yesteryears, in his compendium *Compositions of Śyāmā Sastri, Subbaraya Sastri, and Aṇṇāsvāmi Sastri*, has mentioned it as a composition of Subbaraya Sastri. A few other scholars and musicians too, on the basis of their analysis of the styles of various composers, strongly opine that this kṛti is a composition of Tiruvalur Ramasvami Pillai and not Subbaraya Sastri's.

Considering the high merit of the composition, both from the musical as well as the sāhitya angles, it may not be irrelevant to make one or two remarks about them here. This composition which is in simple Tamil, and clothed in soulful Vasantā phrases, is at once enchanting and appealing to listeners. As a crown, it has a lilting svara sāhityam, brimful of svarākṣara beauty. The svara madhyama (Ma), has been used in an admirable manner, with the corresponding sāhitya syllables falling under them, lifting the composition to great heights. The term 'Kumāra', which is Subbaraya Sastri's mudrā, figures in the svara sāhityam.

In passing it may be mentioned here that the late T. Sankaran, another grandson of the late Vina Dhanammal, and a musical historian, makes a reference to this kṛti in his book titled **Isai Mēdaigal**. He states that Dhanakoti Ammal<sup>4</sup>, Vidvān Kanchipuram Nayana Pillai's grand aunt, used to sing this kṛti with a sense of pride, boasting that this kṛti of Subbaraya Sastri is their "kuḍumba sotthu" or family treasure.

It is just unfortunate that this composition is caught in such ambiguity of authorship. We leave it at this point, hoping for further research to throw light on this.

## Śiṣya paramparā

Last but not the least, is the śiṣya paramparā or the line of disciples, but for whom we would not have come to know the invaluable contributions to music, of these past masters. Credit must be given to them for serving as links, preserving the musical traditions of the past, and meticulously passing them on to posterity. Subbaraya Sastri was blessed with a well-known śiṣya paramparā that proved to be worthy torchbearers of his inimitable style of music. He had the advantage of dual śiṣya paramparā-s, which happened to include some of the well-known musicians of yesteryears – the one was through the Vina Dhanammal line and the other through his own son-in-law and his disciples. It is said that Vina

<sup>4</sup> Dhanakoti Ammal belongs to the sishya parampara of Subbaraya Sastri.

Dhanammal's great-great-grandmother, was a direct disciple of Subbaraya Sastri himself. Thus, his music had been passed on down the line of Dhanammal, to her daughters, and to her granddaughters viduṣī-s Saṅgīta Kalānidhi T. Brinda and Saṅgīta Kalā Āchārya T. Muktha, illustrious doyennes of the past.

To the other śiṣya paramparā belonged, Mettu Kamakshi and Visalakshi – great-grandmother, and grandmother respectively of Kanchipuram Nayana Pillai<sup>5</sup> – who were trained under Kacci Sastri, who was none other than the son-in-law of Subbaraya Sastri. Visalakshi's daughters were Kanchipuram Dhanakoti Ammal and Kamakshi, who together performed as the well-known Dhanakoti Sisters. Kamakshi's son was Nayana Pillai. Added to this, another musician of great name and fame who hailed from Kanchipuram had come under the influence of Nayana Pillai – it was viduṣī D.K. Pattammal who went on to become a Saṅgīta Kalānidhi. Thus, it can be observed how Subbaraya Sastri's compositions have come down to us through two illustrious musical lineages.

All these renowned musicians have painstakingly preserved the complex musical traditions of the Sastri family – Syama Sastri and Subbaraya Sastri. It is to them we owe whatever we have today of the music of Subbaraya Sastri.

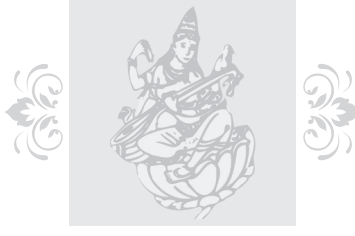
## Conclusion

Summing up, we wish to point out that in spite of Subbaraya Sastri limiting his compositions to a handful of kṛti-s in easy-to-follow sāhitya, in common rakti rāga-s and simple tāḷa-s, each of his compositions is a standout masterpiece in its own right, embellished with various nuances which clearly indicate the passing down of the legacy of the Music Trinity.




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5 An eminent musician and a great pallavi exponent under whom T Brinda and T Muktha had trained for several years in their formative years.



## Understanding ‘Ṭhāyam’ from Thanjavur Manuscripts

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**T**hāyam is one of the musical forms which had been more popular in the 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries, in the Thanjavur region. This was performed along with Ālāpa, Gīta and Prabandha. Venkatamakhī, in his Caturdaṇḍī Prakāśikā, gives a brief note on the Ṭhāyam, in the seventh chapter. Notations of more than 250 Ṭhāyam compositions are found in the palm leaf manuscripts (Mss) of the Sarasvatī Mahal Library, Thanjavur (TMSSML). It is learnt that King Sahaji had requested his court musicians to document and preserve the music compositions that existed during his time. These are presently housed in TMSSML under the title, “Rāgalakṣaṇamu” (Vasudeva Sastri, JMA, 1946, p.90).

This essay aims to present some observations on the structure of the Ṭhāyam compositions, based on the study of the notations of Ṭhāyam-s from TMSSML. This would enable to understand the Ṭhāyam form in a different dimension.

### Earlier work on Ṭhāyam

Research on the music Mss of the TMSSML in general, and the Ṭhāyam form in particular, has already been undertaken by some scholars, as noted below.

1. Publishing of notations of Ālāpa and Ṭhāyam of select rāga-s from the Mss of TMSSML — “Rāga Ālāpanas and Ṭhāyams”, by K. Vasudeva Sastri, published in the year, 1958.
2. Report on the Music Mss of TMSSML by T.G. Ananthasubramaniam for his project

funded by Sangeet Natak Akademi, 1965, from the website <https://www.dropbox.com/s/1hqg8y9lriurqgg/Mss-TG-Anantasubramanian-Reports-SitaS-0069.pdf?dl=0>

3. Doctoral study on the music Mss of TMSSML and the same published as the book “Tanjore as a Seat of Music”, by Dr. S. Seetha, 1981.
4. Article published in the Journal of the National Centre for the Performing Arts titled, “Thaya” by Dr. S. Seetha (based on her study mentioned above), 1980.
5. Handwritten notes of Dr. S. Seetha on her research at the Sarasvati Mahal library, available in the website, <https://www.dropbox.com/s/937k08jg2czhr23/MssE-TeTmSkt-SitaS-Notes-0067.pdf?dl=0>
6. Editing of the rāgalakṣaṇa-s of Śāhaji based on the manuscript collection of TMSSML into the book, “Rāgalakṣaṇamu of Śāha Maharaja”, by Dr. S. Seetha, 1990.
7. Critical notes and Commentary by Dr. R. Sathyanarayana along with the critical edition of “Caturdaṇḍi Prakashika of Venkatamakhin” – volume-2, published by the IGNCA, 2006.
8. Article published in the Journal of the Madras Music Academy, titled, “Music of Vijayanagara — with special reference to ālāpa and ṭhāya” by Dr. Arati Rao, 2016, pp.72-87
9. Research projects with the IGNCA, SRC, Bengaluru, on the TMSSML Mss, by Dr. Arati Rao, 2019-2022.

The current research has been aimed to present the melodic and structural constructions of Ṭhāyam-s, based on the readings of the Mss.

## Mss on the notations of Ṭhāyam at TMSSML

There are Mss in TMSSML, with titles, like Rāgalakṣaṇamu and Gītamulu, which have the notations of Ālāpa, Ṭhāyam, Gīta, Prabandha and other forms like Sūlādi, Nāmaṇḍi, etc. From the notations, the following observations are made:

- a. Ṭhāyam compositions are primarily made up of svara phrases, set to a particular rāga, but do not correspond to any tāla.
- b. Some Ṭhāyam-s have syllables like ta, na, a and m as sāhitya, mentioned under the respective svara phrases.

- c. Each svara phrase is differentiated with a vertical bar and there are many such svara phrases in a Ṭhāyam.
- d. In most cases Ṭhāyam follows the ālāpa set in the same rāga (e.g. Gujjari — B11586, Velāvali, Śuddha Vasantam — B11573), but in a few Mss, only Ṭhāyam compositions are presented continuously in a row (e.g. Āhiri, Ārabhi, Saurāṣṭra, Devagāndhāri, Kuriñji — B11577).
- e. For some rāga-s, the Ṭhāyam-s occur more than once, but no two of them are alike. In other words, each Ṭhāyam composition is unique and distinct, by itself.
- f. The presentation of Ṭhāyam-s appears to be slightly different in each Ms, thus suggesting that they are documented according to the methods or practices adopted by that particular musician.
- g. Thus a common theoretical description may not be applicable for all the Ṭhāyam-s.

### Structure of Ṭhāyam as observed in Mss

- Each Ṭhāyam consists of set of svara passages and then ends with a Muktāyi.
- The Muktāyi is a very short section, consisting of 5 to 8 svara phrases, which ultimately ends on ṣaḍja.
- There is no title or sectional headings like, Eḍuppu or Makariṇi, on commencement.
- The beginning of Ṭhāyam is marked with a distinctive phrase, which by and large ends with ṣaḍja. This phrase occurs frequently in the whole of the Ṭhāyam. In this paper, it is being named as “Common Ending Phrase”.
- In some Mss, there are two Ṭhāyam-s presented one after the other, in which the end of first is marked as 1 and the second is marked as 2. Thus we have the first one with a specific Common Ending Phrase ending with a muktāyi, with the marking 1 and then a similar structure ending with the numeral marking 2.
- The second part of the Ṭhāyam is titled, Pakkasāraṇi in some cases. e.g. B11586
- Some Ṭhāyam-s are titled as Pañcamasthāyi Ṭhāyam and Madhyamasthāyi Ṭhāyam. It is observed here that the Common Ending Phrase, in these cases is not ṣaḍja, but pañcama or madhyama svara-s, respectively (e.g. Gaula, Sāraṅganāṭa, Sālagabhairavi — B11573).
- Some Mss have Sāraṇi Ṭhāyam and Pakkasāraṇi Ṭhāyam, one after the other, e.g. Hindolam — B11582.

Here is a list of Ṭhāyam-s and their common ending phrases:

Rāga	Common Ending Phrase	Ms No.
Bauḷi	Rrsnddp	11586
Bhūpāḷam	Ggrgrs	11586
Chāyāgaḷa	Mgsrrs	11573
Dhanyāsi	Pmgs	11577
Dīpakam	Rsndp	11582
Gauḷapantu	Rnsndp	11575
Gujjari	Rsns	11575
Mādhavamanōhari	Grndn	11577
Mukhāri	mgsr.	11575
Paḍi	Rrsns	11582
Varāḷi	grgr,rss	11573

## Melodic Construction in the Ṭhāyam

- All Ṭhāyam-s begin with a distinctive phrase<sup>1</sup>, called Common Ending Phrase — CEP.
- The consecutive lines can be marked with the occurrence of the CEP; thus there appears to be at least 7 to 12 lines.
- The Common Ending Phrase is kept as the main base and svara-s or phrases are added to this, for melodic development.
- There is a gradual increase in the range (pitch) of the svara-s added in each line.
- Each phrase is made up of a minimum of 2 to a maximum of 8 or 12 svara-s.
- However, most of the phrases in the beginning are scattered within 3 to 5 svara-s. In other words, the phrase does not travel too wide in pitch level in an octave, in the commencing lines. Example: Hindola – mgs | nd | nns | gmmgs | ndnns | – B11582
- At the end, there are more number of phrases covering a wide range, and finally end with the Common Ending Phrase.
- The phrases are composed of jāṇṭa svara-s quite often.

<sup>1</sup> In this article, it is being named as Common Ending Phrase



- The svara-s are predominantly hrasva or of the duration of one or two units; thus there is no long extension of svara-s.
- The melodic movement appears to be directed in the descending order (avarōhaṇa), so as to reach the Common Ending Phrase.
- The melodic presentations in the Ṭhāyam-s appear to coincide totally with the lakṣaṇa of the respective rāga-s mentioned in the Rāgalakṣaṇamu of Sahaji.

Given below is the Ṭhāyam in the rāga Pūrvi (B11586)

<b>p</b>	<b>m</b>	<b>g</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>g</b>	,	<b>g</b>												1	
g	m	p	d	p	m	l	<b>p</b>	<b>m</b>	<b>g</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>g</b>	,	<b>g</b>					2	
g	m	p	d	n	d	p	m	l	<b>p</b>	<b>m</b>	<b>g</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>g</b>	,	<b>g</b>			3	
s	,	n	d	<b>p</b>	<b>m</b>	<b>g</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>g</b>	,	g								4	
n	d	d	p	<b>p</b>	<b>m</b>	<b>g</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>g</b>	,	<b>g</b>								5	
d	<b>p</b>	<b>m</b>	<b>g</b>	r	g	,	g											6	
r	s	r	g	m	p	d	n	d	p	,	l	<b>p</b>	<b>m</b>	<b>g</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>g</b>	,	<b>g</b>	7
<b>p</b>	<b>m</b>	<b>g</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>g</b>	,	<b>g</b>	l	r	s	r	s	,	s						8
muktāyi																			
p	,	p	<b>p</b>	<b>m</b>	<b>g</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>g</b>	,	<b>g</b>	l	s	,	g	m	p	d	n	s	l
n	d	,	d	l	d	n	d	n	s	r	l	g	r	g	r	s	n	s	s, s

## Ṭhāyam-s with ta-nam syllables

Some Ṭhāyam-s are accompanied with syllables, like, ta, na, a, and m, as sāhitya. Such Ṭhāyam-s do have the same structure, that is, they are made up of a set of phrases which finish on a Common Ending Phrase throughout, and finally concluding with a muktāyi. Further, the Ṭhāyam-s with ta, nam syllables are formed of only one unit and end with a muktāyi. In other words, the second unit or the Pakkasāraṇi part (in some, as noted above in Mss like B11577) is not met with in these Ṭhāyam-s.

## Sāraṇi Ṭhāyam and Pakkasāraṇi Ṭhāyam

In some Mss, the Ṭhāyam-s are titled distinctly as Sāraṇi Ṭhāyam and Pakkasāraṇi Ṭhāyam. For example, in B11582, the Sāraṇi and Pakkasāraṇi Ṭhāyam-s are provided for the same rāga, one after the other. It is observed that the Sāraṇi Ṭhāyam-s are endowed with ta, nam syllables, but their corresponding Pakkasāraṇi Ṭhāyam-s in the same rāga do not have ta, nam syllables (Nāgadhvani, Hindola, Ārdradeśi, Ārabhi – B11582). Another important

feature is that the Common Ending Phrase of the Sāraṇi Ṭhāyam appears to end on ṣadja or a svara in the madhya sthāyi, but the common ending phrases of the Pakkasāraṇi Ṭhāyam-s appear to travel one or two svara-s in the mandra sthāyi. For example,

Bhūpālam (B11586)	Sāraṇi CEP – ggrgrs	Pakkasāraṇi CEP – rrsdp-dpdpdgr
Ārdhradeśi (B11582)	Sāraṇi CEP – pmggr	Pakkasāraṇi CEP – rrsndp
Bhairavi (B11586)	Sāraṇi CEP – ggrsns	Pakkasāraṇi CEP – grsndpdp

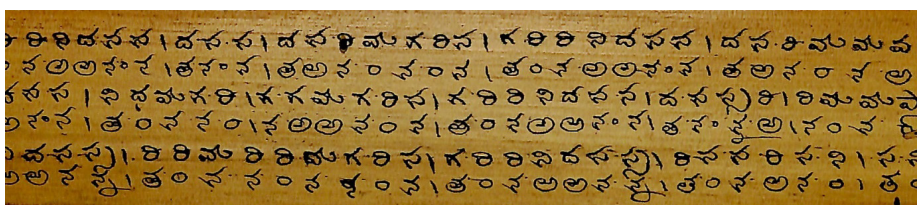
Another significant aspect is the occurrence and distribution of the vowels and the anusvara-s to the corresponding svāra-s, in such Ṭhāyam-s. This aspect will be detailed below.

## Relation between Svāra and Sāhitya in Ṭhāyam-s with ta-nam syllables

Some Ṭhāyam-s have ta, nam syllables as sāhitya. Each svāra is found to extend for a duration of one or two time units. Thus each svāra is equated to one sāhitya syllable. Given below is a Ṭhāyam in the rāga Dīpakam (B11582)

P	,	p	m	G	,	r	R	S	,
Tā	-	na	ṁ	nā	-	na	ṁ	nā	-

It is also noted that the sāhitya set up of the Common Ending Phrase is maintained intact throughout the whole composition, e.g., Ṭhāyam in Mukhāri rāga (B11582)



While analyzing the arrangement of the syllables, it is found that the vowels are very closely placed and there are lesser anusvara-s, noted through the syllable “m”. This would suggest that in case the music is rendered on voice, the tempo should have been lower, for a better clarity in vocal rendering. Or perhaps such musical setting with the uttering of the closely placed vowels in a higher tempo, suggests for being played on instrument (vīṇā). The vowels and the anusvara-s seem to occur almost alternatively, in the Ṭhāyam-s. On the other hand, there are some Ṭhāyam-s, where the vowels are not closely placed, but distributed after a gap of three or more svāra-s. In such cases, there are more anusvara-s too.

This kind of a set up suggests that the composition could be perhaps rendered on voice. In case the music is to be rendered on voice, the tempo should have been lower, for a better clarity. Thus, there does not seem to appear any rule in placing a vowel for any particular svvara (like a vowel for jīva svvara or anusvara for an alpa svvara).

## Gātradaṇḍi and Jantradaṇḍi

With regards to the Ālāpa and Ṭhāyam, there are two terms which are commonly used. They are gātradaṇḍi and jantradaṇḍi. K. Vasudeva Sastri has mentioned this in the notations of ālāpa. Dr. Seetha has also referred to these terms in her book as well as the article on Ṭhāya, that those with nom-tom syllables were meant for vocal singing and called gātradaṇḍi. The other variety without nom tom syllables were termed as jantradaṇḍi, which were adopted for instrumental playing.

In one of the Mss of TMSSML (B11573), the terms gātradaṇḍi and jantradaṇḍi occur at a very few places. But a very significant observation is that they occur in the notations of ālāpa and not in the notations containing Ṭhāyam. Thus occurrence of syllables in Ṭhāyam could suggest that they should be sung. Probably they were meant as a tool for teaching Ṭhāyam or a playing technique.

Secondly, from the study made from the Ṭhāyam-s found in various Mss, it is understood that,

- a) The terms, Gātradaṇḍi or Jantradaṇḍi did not appear in the notations of Ṭhāyam, with respect to the Mss, so far consulted.
- b) Pakkasāraṇi Ṭhāyam-s do not have ta, nam syllables.
- c) Sāraṇi Ṭhāyam possesses such syllables.
- d) Some Ṭhāyam-s, though they have syllables, melodically appear more as a means to understand the playing technique of the instrument, with regard to plucking (using mīṭu).

## Findings

- Two units in a Ṭhāyam composition may represent a single composition with two parts. Because, in the palm-leaf mss, at the end of each composition, there is an indication of ending, resembling a flower like symbol. This signifies that something has been ended, which is noted only at the end of the second section.
- When the Ṭhāyam-s are marked with the numerals 1 and 2, and when the second one is called as Pakkasāraṇi, it could mean that by default, the first part is Sāraṇi Ṭhāyam and must be played on the first (Sāraṇi) string. After completing the first Ṭhāyam, in the Sāraṇi string, the Pakkasāraṇi Ṭhāyam has to be rendered in the next string.

- The presence of ta, nam syllables could also denote the playing technique of these Ṭhāyam-s, in which probably the vowels represent the plucking and the anusvara-s represent the sound produced without plucking.
- Ṭhāyam-s with more anusvara-s and vowels distantly placed, may probably represent the tradition, where it is preferably sung. Another possibility could be probably, the practice of singing the Ṭhāyam-s with ta, nam syllables simultaneously while playing.
- Different Mss contain Ṭhāyam for a same rāga, and no two Ṭhāyam-s are similar. The probable reason could be that each Ṭhāyam was composed or practiced or taught by a particular musician. The differences among them, suggest their idea of presentation of that Ṭhāyam, creativity and individuality.
- The interpretations of earlier research might have to be revisited. Accordingly, the notations of Ṭhāyam-s in TMSSML are said to be deviating from Caturdaṇḍi Prakāśika<sup>2</sup>. But it is felt that there seems to have been a transition in the tradition and it could not be a deviation. If the sthāyi of Venkatamakhi could be equated to the CEP, Yeḍupu or Makariṇi can be substituted with Sāraṇi Ṭhāyam. Likewise, the addition of 4+4 tāna-s and ending on ṣaḍja, can be traced in the notations, but the numbers only seem to vary. Melody also flows in the descending direction in the Ṭhāyam-s. Thus the words of Venkatamakhi could be probably traced and equated to the notations of the Thanjavur Mss of Ṭhāyam-s.

## Conclusion

These notations seem to be documented by musicians and experts in order to preserve the melodic format of a rāga and which would also be helpful for teaching-learning purpose. There could have been a noticeable change in the performing tradition of Ṭhāyam-s, during Sahaji's period and the Rāgalakṣaṇa Mss are the prevailing documents of proof, in the form of lakṣya. A proper lakṣaṇa to these forms had to be probably drafted, after examining all the notations, since a common theoretical description may not be applicable for all the Ṭhāyams. In case of editing these notations, each composition in each manuscript had to be treated independently and could not be combined with each other.

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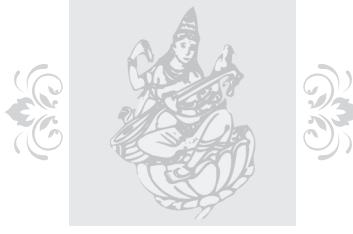
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*[The author wishes to express her sincere gratitude to the Administrative Officer and Dr. Ravi, Telugu Pandit of Sarasvati Mahal Library, Thanjavur for permitting and assisting in consulting the manuscripts]*

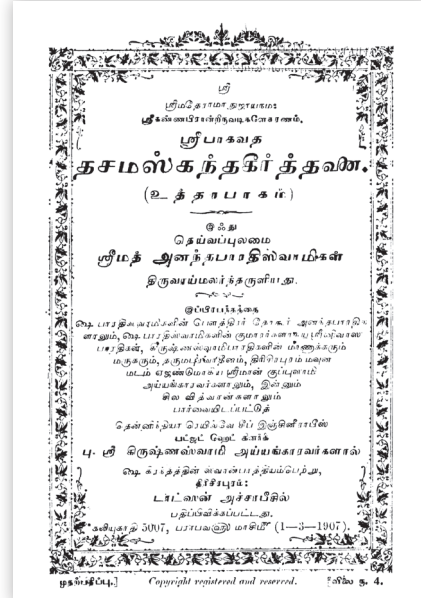
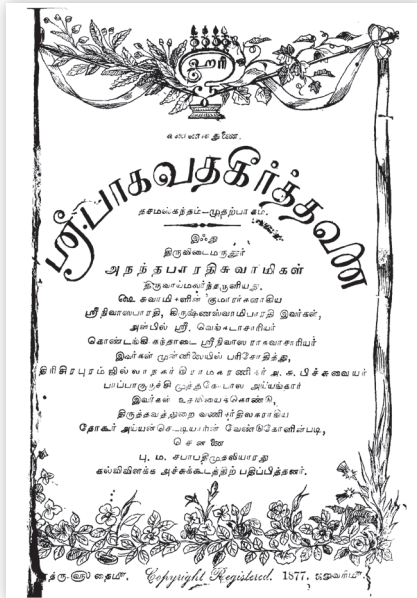




## Composer Anantha Bharathi and his Śrīmad Bhāgavatā Daśama Skanda Kīrtanaikāḷ

Sujatha Vijayaraghavan  
Writer, scholar and musician

[It was in the early nineties, when Vidvān Kalyanapuram Aravamudachariar was rendering Śrīmad Bhāgavatam Daśama Skandam discourses at our residence for nine days that I first heard the name of Anantha Bharathi and his kīrtanai-s in Tamil. Śrī Aravamudachariar sang śloka-s from the Bhāgavatam, Taraṅgam-s from Narayana Teertha's Kṛṣṇa Līlā Taraṅgiṇī and Ālwār Pāsuram-s during his discourse. Once in a while he would sing a Tamil kīrtanai bringing out the dramatic impact of the incidents. He said that they were composed by Anantha Bharathi, who was a contemporary of the Trinity of Carnatic music. Vidvān Embar Vijayaraghavachariar is said to have had a repertoire of Anantha Bharathi's kīrtanai-s, which he sang frequently in his Harikatha.



*There started my quest for the books of the kīrtanai-s, which were said to have been printed in the late 19th century. The diction and dramatic impact of the kīrtanai-s I heard convinced me that they would be a worthy addition to the repertoire of Bharatanāṭyam. I drew a blank with the search in the libraries of Chennai and some outstation ones. Scholars who had their private libraries did not have a copy. A couple of them remembered having had a copy but could not lay their hands on it.*

*I found out that Embar Vijayaraghavachariar's entire library and all his notebooks with his Nirūpaṇam-s were donated to the Music Academy library, but they were not sorted out or indexed. In the meanwhile Viduṣī Suguna Varadachary said that she had preserved a few songs which had been notated and published by the All India Radio in the 1950s and sent me copies. They were beautiful but the content was of a general nature, invoking the gods.*

*My joy knew no bounds when I was informed that the two volumes of Anantha Bharathi's Kīrtanaikaḷ were in the collection of Embar Vijayaraghavachariar and the Music Academy library had digitised the books.]*

## **Life of Anantha Bharathi**

From the preface to the first book we learn that Anantha Bharathi was born in Umayalpuram in the Viśvavasu year 1785, to parents Srinivasa Iyengar and Lakshmi Ammal. He lost his mother when he was five and his father when he was 15. He had started composing songs from the time he was 13 and attained remarkable proficiency in it.

He worked as Karnikar and Dēvasthāna Samparithi in the temples at Thiruvali Thirunagari, Thirukudanthai (Kumbakonam), Thirukalambur and Thiruvidaimarudur. As he spent a considerable amount of time in the latter town, he was popularly known as 'Thiruvidaimarudur Anantha Bharathi'. He was also known as 'Madhyārjunam Anantha Bharathi Kavi' as can be seen from the title page of one of his books. (Madhyarjunam is another name for Thiruvidaimarudur.)

He gave up work at the age of 23 and went around visiting and singing at the Vaiṣṇavite Divya Dēsam-s. This brought him fame and a following.

Ordained by his Kulaguru Uthamaseeli Srinivasa Dikshitar, he composed the Uttara Rāmāyaṇam as a Nāṭakam in the manner of Arunachala Kavi's Rāma Nāṭakam and as a sequel to it. He received invitations from villages and towns to give discourses on Uttara Rāmāyaṇam incorporating his songs.

At the request of the Srīvaiṣṇava-s of Thirukudanthai, he composed as kīrtanai, Srīmad Vedanta Desikan's Vaibhava Prakāśikai. It was printed at Muthialu Naicker's Vaanee

Nikethana Press in 1864-65. A second edition of this book was printed at the Chengalpattu Indian Press around 1880. The Uttara Rāmāyaṇam was published, but the book is not traceable. These two works were first presented in public at the Kavi Vadhisingar maṇṭapam in the sannidhi of Aravamudan at the Sarangapani temple at Thirukudanthai.

(Copies of the two editions of Śrīmad Vedanta Desikan's Vaibhava Prakāśikai Kīrtanai books are preserved at Roja Muthiah Library, Chennai.)

Ramaswamy Iyer, who was a Kacheri Manager at Thirisirapuram (Thiruchirapalli), met Anantha Bharathi and requested him to compose in Tamil, Śrīmad Bhāgavatam Daśama Skandam according to the exposition of Sridhara Swamigal. He started composing it as a musical drama in kīrtanai in his 38<sup>th</sup> year and took more than seven years to complete it. He completed the work up to the 54<sup>th</sup> chapter of the first part, till Rukmani Kalyanam. He then took up the Uttara Bhāgam of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam and wrote from the 55<sup>th</sup> to the 90<sup>th</sup> chapter. He attained the feet of the Lord on 20<sup>th</sup> of Āḍi month in the Viśvavasu year, 1845.

It is significant that both the parts of the Kīrtanaikaḷ were presented by him at the Srirangam Temple, where Kambar had presented his Rāmāvatāram, and later Arunachala Kavi had presented his Rāma Nāṭaka Kīrtanaikaḷ.

Krishnaswamy Aiyangar, who acquired the second part of the Kīrtanaikaḷ and published it, has written a detailed biography of the composer as the preface to the second part. He states that he had scrutinised eight texts of the biography available with the family to compile his preface. Some of the events of the composer's life are attributed by him to divine intervention.

He mentions an early work Saraswati Mālai, composed by Anantha Bharathi in his thirteenth year after a dream he had of the goddess Saraswati writing on his tongue. This early work is not traceable. After this incident he started composing in Gīrvāṇam (Sanskrit) and Draviḍam (Tamil). He started visiting Vaiṣṇava temples and composed songs about them. He went to reside in Thiruvidadimarudur at the invitation of Pratapa Simha Maharaja and was acclaimed as Anantha Kavi.

He was eighteen when he married Lakshmi Ammal of Thokur and lived for a while at Srirangam. It was at this time that he composed the Uttara Kāṇḍam of the Rāmāyaṇam in kīrtanai as Nāṭakam. Contrary to what was stated in the preface to part 1 of the Śrīmad Bhāgavata Kīrtanaikal, Krishnaswamy Aiyangar writes that the Uttara Kāṇḍam was presented at the Srirangam temple in the presence of Āchārya-s like Kandadai Annan,



who bestowed the title of Bharathi on the composer and he was thence called “Anantha Bharathi Swamigal”.

## **Printing of the Books**

At that time there were printing presses in some of the towns in South India, which had facility to print in languages like Tamil, Sanskrit and Grantham.

There were two manuscripts of the first part, one handwritten by Anantha Bharathi himself, and the other written under his supervision by his prime disciples, the brothers Ramayyar and Krishnaier. Pappakurichi Seshayyengar, who was the nephew and disciple of Krishnaswamy Bharathi, the son of Anantha Bharathi, compared the manuscripts and prepared the script for printing. He also compiled the index of the songs appearing at the beginning of the book. It was printed in January 1877 at the Kalvi Vilakka Press of Pu.Ma. Sabapathy Mudaliar of Chennai.

The second part was acquired by P.S. Krishnaswamy Aiyangar employed in the railways and published by him on 1-3-1907. It was printed at the Datsun press in Thirisirapuram (Thiruchirapalli). The manuscript was edited by Anantha Bharathi's grandson and his namesake Thokur Anantha Bharathi and Kuppuswamy Aiyangar, who was the nephew and disciple of Srinivasa Bharathi and Krishnaswami Bharathi, sons of the composer.

## **Contemporaries of Anantha Bharathi**

It is seen that Anantha Bharathi was a contemporary of the Trinity and other composers in the Thanjavur region. The list below shows that only Arunachala Kavi had passed away before Anantha Bharathi was born.

Seerkazhi Arunachala Kavi	: 1711-1779 born in Thillaiyadi
Gopalakrishna Bharathi	: 1810-1896 born in Narimanam
Anantha Bharathi	: 1785-1845 born in Umayalpuram
Tyagaraja	: 1767-1847 born in Tiruvarur
Muthuswami Dikshitar	: 1775-1835 born in Tiruvarur
Syama Sastri	: 1762-1827 born in Tiruvarur

## **Compositions of Musical Drama in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries**

Harikatha was introduced during the Mahratta rule in Thanjavur and spread as a popular form of performing art. Musical discourses flourished with several musicians and scholars performing in the temples in towns and villages. While these artists selected the songs from

many texts and multiple languages, composers were inspired to weave individual stories through musical compositions.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century a few musical works were composed in the form of a drama. They were called Kīrtanaikaḷ or Caritram.

1. Tyagaraja's Naukā Caritram
2. Gopalakrishna Bharathi's Naṇḍanār Caritram
3. Arunachala Kavi's Rāma Nāṭaka Kīrtanai
4. Anantha Bharathi's Śrīmad Bhāgavata Daśama Skānda Kīrtanaikaḷ – Two parts
5. Anantha Bharathi's Śrīmad Vedānta Desika Vaibhava Prakāśikai Kīrtanai
6. Anantha Bharathi's Uttara Śrī Rāmāyaṇa Kīrtanai

It is not known whether they were sung as an opera or enacted as a drama. They seem to have been inspired by the Bhāgavata Meḷa nāṭya nāṭakam-s, which were enacted as musical dramas with dance and dialogues. The works of Gopalakrishna Bharathi and Arunachala Kavi were presented as musical discourses in telling the story. Individual songs were also presented by the musicians at times. The terms 'Isai Nāṭakam' and 'Geya Nāṭakam' were given to such works much later by musicologists.

His biography mentions that Anantha Bharathi was invited by the villages around to present his Uttara Rāmāyaṇam and Śrīmad Vedānta Desika Vaibhava Prakāśikai as discourses. It is probable that he later presented the Bhāgavata Kīrtanaikaḷ as discourses in a similar manner. In subsequent decades, Harikatha artistes used his songs in their expositions.

## **Two parts of Śrīmad Bhāgavata Daśama Skānda Kīrtanaikaḷ.**

While the term 'kīrtanai' refers to the musical genre with a pallavi and several caraṇam-s and which may also include an anupallavi at times, Anantha Bharathi has used several musical and literary forms to carry the story forward. In the script he uses the term Daru for all the Kīrtana-s which have multiple stanzas, describing each event in great detail. Many of them are embellished with imagery and other poetic devices.

His deep knowledge of Sanskrit, Tamil and Grantha has facilitated him to combine the forms in a seamless flow to carry the story forward through scenes evoking a plethora of moods.

He has listed out the forms employed as follows.

## Daśama Skāṇḍam – Part 1 – 54 chapters from Devaki Kalyāṇam to Rukmani Kalyāṇam

### Literary forms

Veṇbā	35
Kalitturai	49
Kalippā	1

### Musical Forms

Viruttam	497
Varṇam	1
Vaṇṇam	1
Surajati	1
Dipatai	78
Kīrtanai	335
<b>Total</b>	<b>998 songs</b>

## Daśama Skāṇḍam Uttara Bhāgam Part 2 – Chapters 55 to 90 — from birth of Pradyumna up to Krishna living happily in Dwaraka with his wives

### Literary forms

Veṇbā	119
Kalitturai	94
Kaliveṇbā	8
Viruttārtham	5
Veṇbārtham	3
Thuraiyārtham	1
Kalittazhisai	1
Kochakalippā	1

### Musical Forms

Viruttam	650
Daru	329

Dipatai	93
Kummi	3
Ānanda kaḷippu	2
Kaṇṇi	1
Paṇ	1
Paranjōti patikam	1

**Total 1,313 Songs**

## Genres used by other composers of musical drama

**Arunachala Kavi** has also employed a mix of literary and musical genres.

# **Rāma Nāṭakam** — Viruttam, Kalitturai, Koccagam, Dipatai, Daru, Veṇbā, Vacanam, Tōḍayam, Pāyiram

**Gopalakrishna Bharathi** has used a few Harikatha genres and folk genres along with literary and musical ones.

# **Naṇḍanār Caritram** — Kīrtanai, Khaḍga, Peria Khaḍga, Daṇḍakam, Noṇḍi Ciṇḍu, Lāvaṇi, Kaṇṇigal, Tōḍayam, Maṅgalam, Cidambara Kummi, Ānanda kaḷippu, Iru Col Alaṅkāram, Agaval, Ēsal, Nāmāvaḷi, Kalitturai, Tukkaḍa, Gavai, Viruttam

## Raga-s and Tāla-s in Śrīmad Bhāgavata Kīrtanaikal

Anantha Bharathi has given raga-s and tāla-s for all the kīrtanai-s and other songs. For viruttam-s he has not mentioned any rāga-s, as they were perhaps meant to be sung in same rāga as the song that followed. He has used major rāga-s like Śaṅkarābharaṇam, Kalyāṇī, Tōḍī, Kāmbhōjī, Bhairavī, Pantuvarālī, Sāvērī and Mōhanam which are repeated often. Rāga-s like Saurāśṭakam, (Souraṣṭram), Suruṭṭi, Punnāgavarālī, Madhyamāvatī, Bilahari, Ānandabhairavī, Ārabhi, Nādanāmakriyā, Biyākaḍai (Begada ) occur in lesser frequency. Some of the rarer rāga-s used by him are Paraju, Māñjī, Asāvērī, Thusāvantī (Dwijāvantī), etc. Two songs are in the rāga Cengala, which might be Jingala, in which Tyagaraja has composed a single kṛti Anāthudānugānu. Anantha Bharathi has not provided notations to any of the songs.

He has employed common tāla-s like Āḍi, Rūpaka, Miśra, Jhampai, Tripuṭa and Cāpu. These songs would have been sung to the accompaniment of the ciplakattai, as it is done even today by Harikatha artistess. This was perhaps the reason for his choice of common rhythmic cycles and for not using complex rhythmic modes.

## Diction and Poetry of Anantha Bharathi

The diction is literary, poetic, conversational and colloquial with Sanskrit and archaic words interspersed. There are whole songs and passages in Grantham. Well versed in Tamil, Sanskrit and Grantham he mingles them often in Maṇipravāḷam — the mode that was popular and common among scholars of the period. The commentaries on Divya Prabandham were written in such a style in prose. Anantha Bharathi exercises the freedom to traverse through these languages in lyrics and poetry. The lines have ādi prāsa and in most cases āntya prāsa — rhymes at the beginning and end of the lines.

தேவகியை மாலை சூட்டினார் வசு  
தேவர் மங்கலம் பூட்டினார்

Sometimes there are internal rhymes in the middle of the lines, giving an extra bounce to the emphasis.

பாலகிருஷ்ணனைத் தூக்க பாரிலெடுத்துத் தாக்க

The viruttam-s, kīrtanai-s and other songs appear densely packed with words. But when they are sung, every word falls in its place. The rhymes and the rhythm render every word relevant. It is to be remembered that these were illustrations sung during a discourse. While the viruttam-s are sung without rhythm in a slow, expansive mode, the songs following them are in a brisker pace. Most kīrtana-s have several stanzas and there are speed variations indicated as some of them are in madhyama kāla.

## Format of the Daśama Skanda Kīrtanaikaḷ

Anantha Bharathi commences the first part of his Śrīmad Bhāgavatam with invocations, Avai Aḍakkam (humble declaration of his own inadequacy and seeking the approval of the learned, in the nature of an Apologia), Tōḍayam and Maṅgalam.

He then gives a brief summary of the story in Part one and Part two, dividing them into three phases, named Gōkula Līlai, Mathurā Līlai and Dwārakā Līlai, the deeds of Krishna in the three respective places.

The story commences with Sridhara Swami's preface in a four-line song and the stage is set with king Parikshit entreating Suka Brahma Muni to tell him the story of Krishna. The story is related through prologues, monologues, dialogues and descriptions.

Kīrtana-s and songs are preceded by viruttam-s, stating the context. The songs carry the story forward through narration by Suka Muni or dialogues and monologues by the characters in songs. There are no spoken dialogues.

The two parts contain the Pañca Gītai-s, namely

1. Gōpika Gītai
2. Bhramara Gītai
3. Uddhava Gītai
4. Śruti Gītai
5. Gurari Gītai

And the Pañca Stutī-s by

1. Dēvā-s
2. Dēvakī
3. Vasudēva
4. Brahma
5. Akrūra

These could be taken separately for learning and recitation.

### Significance of Selected Songs

In the first part of his Daśama Skanda Kīrtanaikal, Anantha Bharathi states in his opening prayer to Vinayaka (the footnote explains that Vi Nāyaka refers to Garuda — this can also be seen in Muthusvami Dikshitar's Śrī Venkatagiriśam in Suruttī) — his intention to compose in ornate dramatic Centamiz and in kīrtanai the text of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam.

He entreats as follows

பாகவதம் பனிரெண்டு கந்தம்  
 திருத்தியிதை நாடகாலங்காரச் செந்தமிழ்  
 செய்யவே துணையுன் பாதாரவிந்தம்  
 .. ..  
 .. பாகவதங்கீர்த்தனையாகச் சொல்ல  
 அருள் மழையே பொழிந்து நீ காப்பாய்

The Tōḍayam and Maṅgalam at commencement are common to Bharatanāṭyam and Bhajanai traditions. The pallavi of the Maṅgalam is as follows.

பல்லவி  
 ஸந்ததம் மங்களம் மங்களம் ஸ்ரீ கிருஷ்ணருக்கு  
 இசைந்தது மங்களம் மங்களம் (ஸந்ததம்)

The Tōḍayam begins with the word Jaya according to the grammar of the genre which is also called Jaya.

தோடையம்

இராகம் : நாட்டை

தாளம் : ஜம்ப

சரணங்கள்

ஜய தேவகீ பாலன் ஜய வேணு கோபாலன்

ஜய ருக்மணீ லோலன் ஜய கதையைச் சொலவே ஆ ஆ

He relates the lesser-known episode of the asura Thirnavirutthan, who comes as a tornado and snatches away the infant Krishna. The baby grows heavy as he carries him aloft in the sky and the asura falls to the ground and dies. The composer says that the asura merely touched the baby and got himself killed by his own hands.

தரு இராகம்- மோகனம்

அட தாள சாப்பு

பல்லவி

பால கிருஷ்ணனைத் தொட்டானே திரணாவிருத்தன்

காலனுக்கு அகப்பட்டானே (பால)

அனுபல்லவி

பாலகிருஷ்ணனைத் தூக்க பாரிலெடுத்துத் தாக்க

சாலச் சுழற் காற்றாகத் தானே தன்னுயிர் போக்க (பால)

Saulabhyam and Paratvam, two cardinal traits of the Krishna avatāra are brought out in the episode where Yasoda ties up Krishna, who is the object of the Upaniśad-s, and who cannot be captured by the greatest of the ascetics.

தரு இராகம்-பரசு

ஏக தாளம்

பல்லவி

உபநிடப்பொருளாகும்-கிருஷ்ணனை உரலில் கட்டினாள்

உத்தமி யசோதையே

அனுபல்லவி

தபோநிதிகட்கும் கட்டுப்படாதாரைத்

தாமோதர நாமராகவே(உபநிட )

There are jati passages in some of the songs, noteworthy being the kīrtana on Kāṭīṅga nartana.

தரு இராகம் – கல்யாணி

ரூபக தாளம்

பல்லவி

நாராயணர் ஆடினரே நந்தகோபன் மகிட்சி நாடி  
நல புண்ணியமே நண்ணிய ஸாமி கிருஷ்ண ஸாமி (நாரா)

ஜதி

தஜ்ஜந் தகஜந் தஜந்-தஜந்தரி ஜகதரி குகுதரி  
கிடதக-தகணக தகு-திமி-தகுதரி கிடதக-தாந்தாந்  
தகதிந் தீனுத கிடதக-தகணக தகுதிமி-தகு-தரிகிட  
தித்-தளங்கு-தளங்கு-தக திக-ததிங்கிணத்தோம் (நாரா)

The Bhāgavata Mēla songs were replete with jati-s, which have been handed down through generations and are being sung and performed even today at Melattur. Knowledge of solkaṭṭu-s and jati kōrvai-s could have been accessible to him through Bhāgavata Mēla, which was performed at several villages in the neighbourhood.

Guru Mahalingam Pillai of the Sri Rajarajeswari Bharata Natya Kala Mandir at Mumbai hailed from the parampara of Nāṭyācārya-s of Thiruvidadaimarudur. During the Bharatanāṭyam Traditions (Parampara) seminar organised by The Sruti Foundation in 1989, he had spoken about the daily duty of recitation of solkaṭṭu-s performed by his elders and himself at the temple. Anantha Bharathi who spent several years at the place would have had the opportunity to listen to them and probably interact with the Nāṭyācārya-s.

His association with cinna mēla repertoire is seen by his use of the music of the famous Husēnī Svarajati at the climactic episode of the Rāsa naṭanam.

Surajati (Svarajati) is a genre used both in music and Bharatanāṭyam with some differences in its format for the two art forms. Here Anantha Bharathi has used the format handled in dance and has taken the dhātu of the famous svarajati in the rāga Husēnī. The original composer of the dhātu (music) was Pachimiriyam Adiyappiah (1740-1833), the composer of the famous Viribōṇi varṇam in Bhairavī. The mātu (lyric) for the music *E mandayānara* was composed by Melattur Venkatarama Sastri (1770-1830). The musical framework became so popular that several contemporaries and successors composed lyrics to fit into it.

Thus, we have *E mayaladira* by Melattur Veerabhadraia (1789- 1786???), *Pāhimām Brihannāyike* by Maharaja Swati Thirunal (1813-1846) and *Maiyal konden* by Vazhuvoor Chamu Nattuvanar.

Anantha Bharathi has composed the sahityam for all the lines of the svarajati, including those of muktāyi and ciṭṭa svara-s.



தரு இராகம் – உசேனி

திஸ்ர தாளம்

பல்லவி

ராஸ நடனம் செய்தார் கோபால-அரி

ராஸ நடனம் செய்தார் (ராஸ)

While describing Krishna's wondrous deeds at Mathura the composer describes how he portrayed Dāsa Rasa to all his spectators. As against the concept of Aṣṭa Rasa and the later addition of śānta as the ninth Rasa, the composer adds Mōha Bhakti as the tenth Rasa.

தரு இராகம் –ஆனந்த பைரவி

ஆதி தாளம்

பல்லவி

தச ரஸங் காட்டினாரையா மெய்யாகவே

தச ரஸங் காட்டினாரையா

அனுபல்லவி

வசுதேவ தேவகி குமார கம்பீர தீர

பசுபால கிருஷ்ணனந்த பலபத்திரருடனே சேர (தச)

சரணம்

10 யோகிகளுக்கெல்லாம் பரதத்துவ

மென்னுஞ் சாந்தி யாகிய ரஸங்கொடுத்தாரையா

பின்னும் ஏக பரதேவதா ரூபமென் றுன்னும்

ஹரி பாக விருஷ்ணிகளுக்கே மோக பக்தி தந் தென்னும் (தச)

The famous letter sent by Rukmini to Krishna is a beautiful translation of the Sanskrit ślōka in the Bhāgavatam. The rhymes in the lines lend it a charming cadence.

பல்லவி

விண்ணபத்திரம் உருக்குமணி

விண்ணபத்திரம் (விண்ண)

சரணம்

1. புவனசுந்தரா அச்சுதா புகழ்சேர் உமது ரூபம்

அவனி மேல் கண் கொண்டு பார்ப்பார்க்கு அகிலமாகிய லாபம்

செவையதாய்க் கேட்போர் செவியர் சென்றன குணப் பிரதாபம்

அவருள்ளாய் அங்கிருக்கவே அகலுமே அங்க தாபம்

குவலைய மீதில் உன் குணங்களும் ரூபமும் நீடவே கேட்ட நாள் முதல்  
கவலை கொண்டு என்னது ஆசையால் நாணமும் ஓடவே என் மனது  
நவ மோகனாகாரர் உம்மிடத்திலே வந்து கூட வேறெண்ணமில்லேன்  
இவகை மகிமையுள்ள நீரெங்கே நானெங்கே தேடவே (விண்ண)

The inclusion of three Kummi-s in the second part is significant as Kummi-s were popular among women. Housewives of all age groups, young and old women and teenagers learnt to sing them in chorus and dance with clapping of hands and going in a circle. It was an informal performance and they did it on auspicious occasions like a wedding or during temple festivals. There is reason to believe that the Kummi-s by Anantha Bharathi might have been popular among the women of his time.

### Anantha Bharathi and his works go into oblivion

From the dates of publication of his works we understand that his songs were popular even until the early twentieth century. How they and their composer came to be forgotten after that time is inexplicable. Gopalakrishna Bharathi's songs came into the music and dance repertoire. Arunachala Kavi's Rāma Nāṭaka kīrtanai got a boost when vidvān Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar set some songs to music and popularised them through his concerts and his disciples. Anantha Bharathi was not taken up by either the musicians or the dancers. Some of the songs survived through Harikatha.

In the 1950s, Tiruchi station of All India Radio had chosen a few invocatory songs, which could be part of the concert repertoire, set them to music in rāga-s different from those set down by the composer. These were published in the fortnightly issues of Vanoli, a programme book, and the songs were taught in the *Isai Payirchi* slot during the week. Some of them were:

1. பரஞ்சோதி நீரே பரப்ரும்மம் – பிலஹரி
2. நமோ நமோ தேவ தேவா கிருஷ்ணா – மந்தாரி
3. எவன் அறிவான் உம்மை – முகாரி
4. பகவானே பரமானந்த குருவே –
5. அகில லோக நாதனே கிருஷ்ணா— மலயமாருதம்
6. மாயனே கிருஷ்ணாவதார – சாமா
7. காயாம்பூ வண்ணனே நில்லும் – மணிரங்கு

These did not have the envisaged impact on the music scene and were not taken forward.

## Anantha Bharathi's composition set to music by vidvan R.K. Shriramkumar

(2)

Rāgam:- Mohanam Tālam:- Misrachāpu (BĀLAKRISHNANAI)

Pallavi

1) || ś, ś ś ś || || ś, ś d p d, || || gg, p, d, ||  
Bā la krishnanai to ttā ne triṇā vrittan

|| ś, ś ś, r, || || g r, ś, r d || || ś; ś; ||  
kā la nuk ku a ga pattā ne

2) || ś, ś ś, ś || || ś; d p d, || || gg, p, d, ||  
Bā la krishnanai to ttā ne triṇā vrittan

|| p d s r g p g r ś, || || ś ś, ś, r d || || ś; ś; ||  
kā la nuk ku a ga pattā ne

Anupallavi

1) || g, g g, g r || || ś r, ś r g; || || p, r ś ś, ś || || r d, ś r; ||  
Bā la krishnanai too kka pā r i e d u t t u tā kka

2) || g, g g, g r || || ś r, ś r p g, || || p, r ś ś, ś || || r d, ś r; ||  
Bā la krishnanai too kka pā r i e d u t t u tā kka

|| ś, ś d p d || || g r s r g p d s d d || || d; ś, ś, || || ś, ś, ś r g p ||  
jā la shoo zha kāt trā ga tā ne tan nuyir po kka

Charanam

|| d; d p g r || || s r g p d s d, d, || || ś d, ś p d || || p p, d, ś, ||  
koo rum shoo rā va l i yā i shu zhan ru van du rai ttā ne

|| d, ś ś, ś, || || ś; d p d, || || gg p; p || || d; ś, ś, ||  
Go ku lat tār kaṇ ga lā i pu zhu di yā l ma rai ttā ne

|| r; r, r, || || ś d, ś, r, || || d, ś r, g, || || ś, ś r g p g r, ś, ||  
Mee rum O sā i y i nā l e Pa t t u di k k u n i rai n dā ne

|| g r, ś, p, || || d g, p, p, || || g, p d, ś, || || ś r, ś r s r g p ||  
vi lā i t t u mā yā i yā l chu k k ā n ga l l u ga lā i i rai ttā ne

(Bā la krishnanai)

## Anantha Bharathi's composition set to music by vidvan R.K. Shriramkumar

Ragam :- Paras Tālam :- Eka (UPANIḌAPORUḌĀKUM)

Pallavi

- 1) || n̄s̄ nd pp d m || || p; m̄g m̄d p m̄m̄ ||  
Upa n̄ḍa poruḷā kum k̄rishnarai  
|| m m m̄g m, m d, || || s̄, s̄s̄ s̄, s̄ s̄ḡr̄ ||  
ura l̄il k̄atti n̄āḷ u ttami yasho da  
|| r̄s̄s̄, n̄s̄ nd p m̄ g m̄ p d ||  
ye  
2) || do || || do || || do || || s̄, s̄s̄ s̄, s̄ s̄ḡr̄ ||  
u ttami yasho da  
|| r̄s̄s̄; ; ; ||  
ye

Anupallavi

- || d̄s̄, nd n, s̄ || || s̄, s̄s̄ m̄; m̄ḡr̄, s̄ ||  
ta po n̄idhi k̄at̄kum k̄attupaḍāḍā rai  
|| n̄d, m; p m̄p || || m̄ḡr̄, s m̄ g m̄ p d || (Upaniḍa)  
Dā mo dara nā marā gave

Charanam-1

- || m, m m̄g m̄p m̄m̄ || ||, m; m; ḡr̄, s̄s̄ ||  
ka t̄t̄m̄ka yiradu e ttam po rā dādai  
|| s, s m̄g m̄ g m̄ || || d m̄d, d n̄ s̄, ||  
to t̄t̄u vee t̄t̄u kayi rel lām dā ne  
|| d m̄d, d s̄, n̄ || || s̄s̄ n̄ s̄ m̄ḡr̄ s̄s̄ s̄ ||  
kaḍi dai ko n̄ar̄ndu m̄uḍiyam̄uḍi ya a  
|| s̄s̄ n̄s̄; s̄s̄ s̄n̄ d p m̄ || || ḡ, p̄ḡ, m; p d n̄ || (Upaniḍa)  
ppadi ren duvirarka dai ku rain diḍa

Charanam-2

- || d p, d n̄s̄nd p m̄ || || m m, m̄p m̄ḡr̄, s̄ ||  
perukka vē vāyāi shoru k̄kuma vi z̄h̄ndu  
|| s s, s m̄g m̄m̄ || || d m̄d; n̄ s̄, ||  
varuttamā gi ya t̄ai m̄el a ruḷ  
|| s̄s̄ n̄ ḡr̄r̄s̄ s̄s̄ s̄ || || s̄s̄ s̄n̄ d d n̄s̄ ||  
peru ga vē anda ari ka t̄t̄u kon̄ḍa  
|| s̄s̄ n̄s̄r̄, s̄s̄ s̄, n̄d p m̄p || || m̄m̄ḡ m; d m, d; n; ||  
varum ā nā rai yya parit̄ sh̄it̄te k̄ēḷum  
(Upaniḍa)

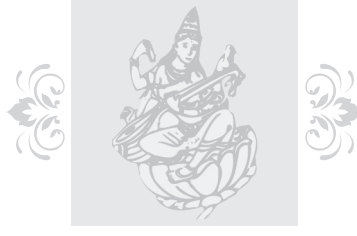
## Conclusion

The wealth of his compositions merit study and propagation by musicians and dancers. They constitute a treasure trove not only for them but also for Harikatha artistes, pravacana kartā-s, research scholars and those who advocate propagation of Tamil Isai. This article tries to throw some light on his works, so that they receive the attention they richly deserve.

## Footnote

*(Some of the songs in Part I selected and scripted by me to cover the story from Krishna's birth to Rukmani Kalyanam were set to music by R.K. Shriramkumar and choreographed by Sasirekha Raammohan. This dance drama was presented on October 2<sup>nd</sup> 2022, under the auspices of Natyarangam, Narada Gana Sabha, as the Tamil programme produced under the endowment in the name of Saṅgīta Kalānidhi Professor S. Ramanathan.)*

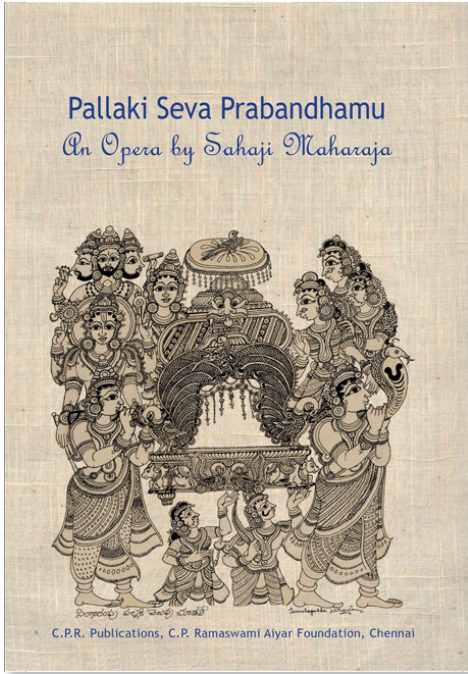




## Pallaki sēva prabandha of Sahaji Maharaja

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**P**allaki sēva prabandha or Gaurī śāṅkara pallaki sēva prabandha is a literary-musical work of the Maratha ruler of Thanjavur, Sahaji (1684-1712 CE). It celebrates the love and union of Lord Siva and Goddess Parvati. Sahaji is known to have organised for this prabandha to be performed during the Paṅguni festival at the Thiruvavur temple<sup>1</sup>.

This prabandha is probably the only work of Sahaji for which both the lyric and the melody have survived and were preserved in the form of text and notation. Subsequently the notation was reconstructed in its melodic form, performed, and documented, whence continues the journey of this beautiful masterpiece of Sahaji Maharaja.

### The author of the Pallaki sēva prabandha

Sahaji Maharaja, the author-composer of Pallaki sēva prabandha was one of the most illustrious Maratha rulers who ruled over Thanjavur. A connoisseur of arts, a learned patron of sciences, arts and literature, a prolific composer of musical and poetic works, and author of works on the science of music, this king was adored by scholars and artists of his time.

<sup>1</sup> Seetha S, "Tanjore as a Seat of Music (During the 17th, 18th and 19th Centuries), by S Seetha, 2001," *Music Research Library*, accessed May 8, 2023, <https://musicresearchlibrary.net/omeka/items/show/3421>.

In Sahaji's reign we find a holistic development and growth of literary and cultural aspects like music, dance and drama, with both lakṣya and lakṣaṇa receiving liberal encouragement and patronage. The village that was gifted by Sahaji for residences of scholars, named after the ruler as 'Sāhajīrājapuram', later known as 'Tiruvisanallur', and the titles that Sahaji was known by, like 'abhinavabhōja', etc., are some of the factors that distinguish this ruler and his contribution to the land he reigned over. It is noteworthy that Sahaji was also highly regarded as an able administrator<sup>2</sup>.

At a glance, Sahaji's artistic creations include — 22 literary musical works (sometimes multi-lingual); more than 200 pada-s (musical compositions); Rāgalakṣaṇamu (a work on the science of music). Among the 22 literary works are four prabandha-s — Gaurī śāṅkara pallaki sēva prabandha; Viṣṇu pallaki sēva prabandha; Pañcaratna prabandha; and Tyāgarāja vinōda citra prabandha. The salient features of these four prabandha-s have been illustrated by Dr. Seetha in her work on Thanjavur and its role in the development of music in South India<sup>3</sup>, which this essay will draw on. This particular essay focuses on the Gaurī śāṅkara pallaki sēva prabandha, with an emphasis on its literary and musical aspects.

## Prabandha – a compositional form

Prabandha — the word literally means — an arrangement / a structured composition<sup>4</sup>. In music the term refers to a specific musical/compositional form. Prabandha is one of the caturdaṇḍī — four main musical forms that were prevalent in performance, namely — ālāpa, ṭhaya, gīta and prabandha. Prior to the caturdaṇḍī formulation we find elaborate treatment of the prabandha form in the Saṅgīta Ratnākara (13<sup>th</sup> CE) and some of its contemporary texts. Somesvara in his Mānasollāsa (12<sup>th</sup> CE) talks about a musical form called 'prabandha' which he says —

*padāntarē svaranyāsair gā (gī)yantē vṛttajātayaḥ |  
natālaniyamastāsām chandasastatra mukhyatā || (16.200)<sup>5</sup>*

— is a form where metric poems are rendered musically with importance to the metre and not tāla.

2 Subramanian, K R, "Maratha Rajas of Tanjore, by K R Subramanian," *Music Research Library*, accessed May 8, 2023, <https://musicresearchlibrary.net/omeka/items/show/489>.

3 Seetha S, "Tanjore as a Seat of Music (During the 17th, 18th and 19th Centuries), by S Seetha, 2001," *Music Research Library*, accessed May 8, 2023, <https://musicresearchlibrary.net/omeka/items/show/3421>.

4 [https://archive.org/details/ldpd\\_7285627\\_000/page/752/mode/2up?view=theater](https://archive.org/details/ldpd_7285627_000/page/752/mode/2up?view=theater)

5 <https://archive.org/details/TxtSktMANasOllAsaSomesvaraVol319610024b/page/n27/mode/2up?view=theater>

Śaṅgīta Ratnākara defines ‘prabandha’<sup>6</sup> as one of the ‘nibaddhagāna’ or structured forms comprising the components — dhātu-s and aṅga-s, while ālāpa would form a part of unstructured or ‘anibaddhagāna’. As regards prabandha, dhātu-s are part of the structural arrangement while aṅga-s like svara, pada, tēnaka, are intrinsic to the prabandha composition. A similar approach to the lakṣaṇa of prabandha is found in Caturdaṇḍī Prakāśikā of Venkatamakhi (17<sup>th</sup> CE) and Śaṅgīta Sārāmṛta of Tulaja (1729-1735 CE). Sahaji too gives illustrations for the raga lakṣaṇa-s from prabandha-s in his Rāgalakṣaṇamu<sup>7</sup>.

‘Prabandha’ then, was used to denote a specific class of musical compositions which were part of vocal and instrumental renditions — we find references to vādyaprabandha-s in Śaṅgīta Ratnākara<sup>8</sup>; as well as poetic/metric works rendered musically. The Pallaki sēva prabandha it seems, is to be taken as the latter kind of prabandha, and as pointed out by Dr. Seetha<sup>9</sup>, the prabandha-s of Sahaji present a fine blend of the literary prabandha and musical, dance and dramatic aspects of the yakṣagāna tradition.

## The performance tradition of Pallaki sēva prabandha at Thiruvārur temple

The Gaurī śaṅkara pallaki sēva prabandha is referred to as a ‘gēyanāṭaka’ by scholars like Dr. Seetha<sup>10</sup> and Prof. Sambamoorthy<sup>11</sup> where literary and musical aspects are most important, and the abhinaya element of dance is incidental. Dialogue, that is part of many yakṣagāna nāṭaka-s is sparsely used in this gēyanāṭaka / prabandha.

The complete work of Pallaki sēva prabandha was performed at the Thiruvārur temple during the Paṅguni utsava and Sahaji is said to have endowed ten vēli-s of land to ensure its regular performance. This seems to have continued for around 200 years, and later a selection of songs from the prabandha were performed by the women from the koṇṭi family in the Kamalamba sannidhi during the vēlīkizamai pūjā (special pūjā to the Goddess held every Friday). The Pallaki sēva prabandha was thus part of the ritualistic context at the

6 Ed. Subramanya Sastri. S. Rev. Krishnamacharya.V.1959. Śaṅgīta Ratnākara. Vol.II.p.204. 4.4-7.&pp.206-207.4.12-13. The Adyar Library and Research Centre. Madras.

7 Ed. Seetha.S.1990. Rāga Lakṣaṇamu of Sāha Mahārāja. p.29. Brhaddhvani. Madras.

8 Ed. Subramanya Sastri. S. Rev. Sarada. S.1986. Śaṅgīta Ratnākara. Vol.III. 6.944.p.561. The Adyar Library and Research Centre. Madras.

9 Seetha S, “Tanjore as a Seat of Music (During the 17th, 18th and 19th Centuries), by S Seetha, 2001,” *Music Research Library*, accessed May 8, 2023, <https://musicresearchlibrary.net/omeka/items/show/3421>.

10 Ibid.

11 Sambamoorthy.P.1955. Pallaki Seva Prabandham: Telugu Opera of Shahaji Maharajah (1684-1710). pp.vii-viii.Indian Music Publishing House. Madras.



Thiruvavar temple<sup>12</sup> for over two centuries. Later the performance lost its ritualistic presence but stayed in the repertoire of the artists and their families. It is from Veerammal, a dēvadāsi performer at Tyagarajasvami sannidhi at Thiruvavar, and one of the koṇṭi family women, P.R. Thilagam, that the traditional tunes for the daru-s were obtained and documented by Prof. P. Sambamoorthy in 1953<sup>13</sup>.

## Sahaji and Tyagesa

As we embark on a journey through the exquisite artistry of the Pallaki sēva prabandha, what is very evident is Sahaji's devotion to Tyagarajasvami of Thiruvavar. In the first daru he refers to the Lord as 'sāhabhūvāsavudaivamu'<sup>14</sup> and in the daru 'nīvēdaivaśikhāmaṇi' sung by Parvati in praise of the Lord, he says 'bhōsalasāhanarēndruni kuladaivamunīvē'<sup>15</sup> — there are many more daru-s where this idea is iterated repeatedly. The use of the word 'kuladaivamu' is very significant in conveying Sahaji's adoration and deep veneration of Tyagarajasvami. It is said that the king would partake his midday meal everyday only after the uccikāla pūjā (pūjā performed at noon as part of the daily pūjā schedule at the temple) was completed and naivēdyam offered to the Lord. A bell relay system was set up and used to convey this information to him<sup>16</sup>.

## Some literary aspects of the Pallaki sēva prabandha

A detailed description of the various features of this prabandha can be obtained from the published versions of the work. Here I will give only details that would help in discussing the literary and melodic aspects. The prabandha comprises 21 daru-s; 18 poetic verses like kandapadya, utpalamālā and campakamālā; 2 gīta-s; a cūrṇika; few vacana-s (prose portions); and a maṅgalam. Experts' opinion is that Sahaji's choice of words and usages in this prabandha belong to a superior linguistic version of the Telugu language.

The story of the prabandha begins with Parvati in viraha (love-separation) telling her sakhī-s (friends) to swiftly go to Paramesvara and bring Him to Her. The sakhī-s leave to meet Paramesvara and find Him in court.

12 Pallaki Seva Prabandhamu: An Opera by Sahaji Maharaja. 2012. pp.148-149. C.P.R. Publications. C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation. Chennai.

13 Sambamoorthy, P. 1955. Pallaki Seva Prabandham: Telugu Opera of Shahaji Maharajah (1684-1710). p.v. Indian Music Publishing House. Madras.

14 Pallaki Seva Prabandhamu: An Opera by Sahaji Maharaja. 2012. p.48. C.P.R. Publications. C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation. Chennai.

15 Ibid. p.64

16 Seetha S, "Tanjore as a Seat of Music (During the 17th, 18th and 19th Centuries), by S Seetha, 2001," *Music Research Library*, accessed May 8, 2023, <https://musicresearchlibrary.net/omeka/items/show/3421>.

The first daru ‘*koluvaiyunnāḍē*’<sup>17</sup> has beautiful prāsa — dvitīyākṣaraprāsa — second letter concordance in this case, for example, ‘*balupoṇka.....naluvaṇka..... talavaṇka..... valacēta....*’

In fact every daru and verse has the prāsa aspect embedded very beautifully.

Probably the most striking example of anuprāsa (random repetition of a letter to create a particular kind of sonic aesthetic) of ‘ma/mā’ in the prabandha is the campakamālā verse<sup>18</sup>

‘*maruvaka candamāma vinumā idinikokabharamā ramā -  
taruṇisamāna māgirijata masama calamēlamānumā  
karamulamrokku māmanavigaikonumā harutōḍadelpumā  
veravakacūḍumā madini vīthiviṭanka sikhāṇkaratnamā*’

In the first daru the sakhī-s describe the grandeur and brilliance of the Lord seated on the gem-studded throne; following which they see Nandi (Siva’s bull and bodyguard) with a cane in his hand, regulating the crowd of dēva-s and devotees.

The sakhī-s find that Paramesvara is busy discussing matters with Vishnu, Brahma and the dēva-s. Seeing the crowd of people waiting to meet the Lord, the sakhī-s are worried that they may not be able to reach Him in time to give Parvati’s message. They decide to request one of Siva’s ornaments to convey their message to the Lord quickly. Then follows an interesting dialogue section in the prabandha where the sakhī-s discuss who they could ask:

They first think of requesting Ganga. Then they reject the idea as they feel Ganga is very violent, drowns people, and is not at all dependable. It is interesting that the poet portrays an unconventional idea where Ganga, who is commonly associated with purity and sanctity is described as vicious, frightening people, etc. It fully justifies the statement of the subhāṣita – ‘*apārē kāvyasamsārē kavireva prajāpatiḥ*’ (in the wide world of poetry the poet is the sole creator)<sup>19</sup>.

Their attention is now drawn to the deer in Siva’s hand; they first find him a good choice — ‘Siva has kept you near Him in appreciation of your friendly nature. You must therefore help us unhesitatingly and convey our message quietly in the Lord’s ears’ they tell him; but soon enough they are doubtful if the deer, who is very timid, could be the right person to

17 Pallaki Seva Prabandhamu: An Opera by Sahaji Maharaja. 2012. p.48. C.P.R. Publications. C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation. Chennai.

18 Ibid.p.54.

19 [https://archive.org/details/MahaasubhaasitasamgrahaVol\\_1-8/Mahaasubhaasitasamgraha\\_Vol\\_2](https://archive.org/details/MahaasubhaasitasamgrahaVol_1-8/Mahaasubhaasitasamgraha_Vol_2)

communicate such a delicate love-message — a task that requires compassion, righteousness in speech, astuteness, shrewdness, and other such qualities.

With the deer being declared as incompetent for the task, the sakhī-s decide to approach the snake and request him to convey their message in the daru ‘*delupavayya*’<sup>20</sup>. They then realise that the snake too may not be the right choice to deliver a love-message — he is full of poison — ‘*paluviṣamu*’ and is double-tongued ‘*reṇḍujihvalu*’. Note that the poet beautifully uses the word ‘*reṇḍujihvalu*’ as a pun, referring to the snake’s double-forked fang, and a person who is inconsistent in his speech, commonly referred to as loose-tongued or double-tongued.

The sakhi-s go to the moon on Siva’s head with a brilliant campakamālā verse ‘*maruvakacandamāma*’ (referred to earlier in this essay to illustrate anuprāsa with ‘ma’). But they see that he too may not be the right choice — he was born with poison (referring to the anecdote of the churning of the milky ocean by the dēva-s and asura-s when both poison and the moon are said to have emerged from it); and he ruins his own sister Lakshmi’s home (referring to the closing of the lotus flower when the moon rises in the night. The lotus is said to be Goddess Lakshmi’s dwelling-place).

The sakhī-s, not finding any other way, somehow manage to reach Paramesvara and convey Parvati’s message and He immediately calls for His palanquin. There is a daru that exclusively describes the beauty and grandeur of the ‘pallaki’<sup>21</sup>.

In the daru ‘*kadalimpakurōyipallaki*’ the sakhi-s direct the palanquin-bearers to be careful and gentle while carrying the pallaki so that they do not tire the Lord who is inside. They tell them — ‘do walk straight and with measured steps lest the world that rests in the Lord’s stomach may tremble’ — here we find a beautiful blending of the idea of a tangible form of Paramesvara sitting inside the pallaki, and His cosmological form that holds the universe in Itself.

Once Paramesvara enters the abode of Parvati, the sakhi-s who are spectators to the performance of the various pūjā-s like heccarika, hārati, naivēdya, and upacāra-s like fanning and offering of perfumed anointment, lālī, as part of the utsava ritual, describe them in detail. Paramesvara and Parvati thus retire to the decorated bed chamber, the paḷḷi-arai. Then the sakhī-s call upon the night vigil deities, Vinayaka, Bhairava, Bhadrakali and Ayyanar, one for each of the four jāma-s of the night respectively, to ensure that the divine couple are not disturbed. It is noteworthy that the sannidhi-s of these four deities are found at specific directional locations in the precincts of Thiruvavur kṣētra.

20 Ibid.p.53

21 Ibid.p.56

A remarkable feature in the lyric of the prabandha is the manner in which the composer incorporates his mudrā ‘sāha’ in interesting ways. In the daru ‘*eṭṭarammandunōyamma*’<sup>22</sup> where the anxious sakhī-s describe how busy Siva is and wonder how they will be able to reach Him and give their message, the composer says – ‘*śrīsāhaghanuḍu gāviñcumēṭikavita luvinuvelā*’ — ‘O how can we disturb the Lord when He is listening to the poems composed by Sāha’.

The aṣṭaka where Parvatī’s sakhī-s describe to Her the upacāra-s (services) to be done to the Lord, the poet says, ‘*velayasāhavibhuṇḍucēsina vinutipadamulu pāḍumi*’<sup>23</sup> — combining skilfully the request of the ardent devotee to the Goddess to sing his poems to the Lord while they are in ēkānta (only the two of them), and embedding his mudrā.

In two of the daru-s — the description of hārati for the divine couple, and the maṅgalam of the work — a noteworthy aspect is that the lyric glorifies both Paramesvara and Parvatī in alternate lines very beautifully<sup>24</sup>.

There are other noteworthy features: the campakamālā verse ‘*sakhiyarō*...’<sup>25</sup> skilfully lists the qualities of a messenger. These instances illustrate how literary works have much more to offer of times past, than pure poetic beauty. An interesting idea may be inferred from the usages in the daru and the verse that talk about the deer. When the sakhī-s request the deer to help them in the daru ‘*vinnavimpavē mā cinnimrgamā*’, the word for deer ‘*mrgama*’ is used in its prakṛti form. In Telugu, words may be used in two forms namely prakṛti (natural form) and vikṛti (derived form). In the verse where they reject the choice of the deer, the vikṛti form is used – ‘*mokamulakēḍa*’. This subtly reflects the difference in the tone of the speaker in the two contexts, where the prakṛti form suggests a respectful manner while the vikṛti shows a feeling of discontent and disappointment about the situation.

## An interpretative exploration of the Pallaki sēva prabandha

Though this work was created to be performed during the Thiruvārur temple utsava as an offering to the Lord by his devotee Sahaji, it is not strictly ‘ritualistic’ in its spirit, language and content. It describes the splendour of the pallakisēva, combining it with the night pūjā ritual of the Lord retiring to the paḷli-arai (bed chamber) where the Goddess is waiting for His arrival. The expression of this is from the perspective of a devotee witnessing the rituals and informing other devotees who are eager to see the happenings in the utsava,

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.p.50

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.p.68

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.p.65 & pp.69-70

<sup>25</sup> Pallaki Seva Prabandhamu: An Opera by Sahaji Maharaja. 2012. p.53. C.P.R. Publications. C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation. Chennai.

conveyed through the conversations and descriptions of Parvati's sakhī-s who anchor the whole narrative of the prabandha. The daru-s that depict heccarika, hāraṭi, naivēdya, lāli are also descriptions of how these upacāra-s are performed, as narrated by one of the sakhī-s to the other/s. It is interesting to see how in this manner, this prabandha connects the internal and external, the actual performance of the rituals in the temple, and anticipation of the participation of the devotees in it, respectively.

There is abundant usage of adjectives that relate to Lord Siva as the divine God of the universe, and it is only in four places in the whole of the prabandha that the name or epithet that is specific to the deity in Thiruvārur has been employed. Most of the anecdotes that feature in the prabandha are about the Lord's prowess and glory in general and not really specific to Thiruvārur kṣētra or the deity Tyagaraja. This possibly reflects the composer's idea of keeping the two kinds of representations — the divine and cosmological representation of Lord Siva, and His iconic manifestation as Tyagesa in the Thiruvārur shrine — engaged with each other.

This idea seems to reflect in the way the epithets of Siva and Tyagesa have been placed throughout the prabandha:-

In the first vacana (prose portion) at the beginning of the prabandha, Sahaji states thus — '*pārvaṭīdēviparamēśvara-viyōgamunu-sahimpajālaka....*'<sup>26</sup> — note the use of '*pārvaṭī*' and '*paramēśvara*' which are common epithets of the Divine couple. In the description of the Lord in court — '*koluvaṭiyunnā ḍēdēvadēvuḍu*'<sup>27</sup> there is only use of generic names of the Lord.

It is only in the campakamālā verse '*maruvaka candamāma vinumā....*'<sup>28</sup> that the first reference to the Lord enshrined in Thiruvārur is found, and that too not as a direct reference to Him, but featuring in the adjective to the moon — '*vīthiṭaṅka śikhāṅkaratnamā*' — alluding to the moon as the crest jewel of '*vīthiṭaṅka*' (an epithet of the deity at Thiruvārur). Then as the Lord enters the Goddess's shrine - '*gaurīnagariprāntambula*' (as stated in the prabandha) — the sakhi refers to the dēva-s reciting a cūrṇika in praise of the Lord as — '*jayaṭaya sakalagīrvāṇa .....jayaṭaya tyāgēśa namastē namastē namastē namaḥ*'<sup>29</sup> — this is the first direct mention of the deity's name. Then in the lāli there is a mention — '*canuvupenagona sāhaśaurikaḍubāḷi – tanarajēsinaṁēṭi tyāgēśalāli*'<sup>30</sup>.

26 Ibid.p.47.

27 Ibid.p.48.

28 Ibid.p.54.

29 Ibid.p.59.

30 Ibid.p.67.

Interestingly in the first dvipada of the work – ‘*śrīkarimukhuni....*’<sup>31</sup> Saha refers to Paramesvara and Parvati and says ‘*gaurīśaṅkarula*’, also indicating the name of the prabandha; and in the last dvipada of the prabandha he begins with the same epithets – ‘*śrīśaṅkarunipēra śrīgaupipēra....*’<sup>32</sup> continues with other names of Paramesvara and Parvati, and completes with ‘*tyāgēśupērakātyāyanipēra*’.

It seems that, with respect to the approach of the composer connecting the internal and external contexts, it could be said that SāhajiSahaji has painted a beautiful aural picture that moves from the divine Paramesvara in court, to the deity Tyagaraja in the paḷli-ārai, through subtle and symbolic use of epithets and adjectives.

While scholars are not sure if the nāyikā of this prabandha was meant to be Nilotpalamba or Kamalamba, as there is no clear mention of the particular epithets of both these deities, Sahaji uses the epithet ‘*kātyāyani*’ along with ‘*tyāgēśa*’, keeping up the suspense of the identity of the nāyikā. Interestingly, Muthusvami Dikshitar (1775-1835), in his Bēgaḍa kīrtana on Lord Tyagaraja, ‘*tyāgarājāya namastē*’ mentions thus – ‘*kātyāyanīpatē paśupatē simhāsanapatē*’ – referring to Tyagaraja as Katyayani’s consort. Based on this other reference, it could be inferred that there is a greater possibility of Nilotpalamba, who is known to be Tyagesa’s consort, being the nāyikā of the prabandha.

### Some thoughts on the melodic aspects of Pallaki sēva prabandha

As mentioned earlier, this prabandha is probably the only work of Sahaji whose music survived in the oral practice traditions of the Thiruvapur temple dēvadāsī-s and was notated and documented in 1953 by Prof. Sambamoorthy. He mentions that the practice of performing the prabandha in the Paṅguni utsava was not in vogue, but it was performed every Friday when the Lord was taken to the paḷli-ārai in the pallaki. He describes how 16 artists would stand in two rows on either side of the pallaki and walk with it till it enters the paḷli-ārai, singing and doing abhinaya for the songs from this Śankara pallaki seva prabandha<sup>33</sup>.

With the melodic aspect of the prabandha being known from its music as understood from the notations based out of extant practices, it is difficult to discuss it in relation to the music that was prevalent in Sahaji’s times. But from the details in the notation recorded by Prof. Sambamoorthy we find that twelve rāga-s are featured with some of them repeating for two,

31 Ibid.p.46.

32 Ibid.p.70

33 Sambamoorthy.P.1955. Pallaki Seva Prabandham: Telugu Opera of Shahaji Maharajah (1684-1710). pp.xii-xiii. Indian Music Publishing House. Madras.

three or even four daru-s. Śaṅkarābharāṇa, Pantuvarāḷi, Nādanāmakriya, Ghaṇṭa, Sāvēri, Madhyamāvati and Saurāṣṭra are the rāga-s that are rendered more than once. Punnāgavarāḷi, Saindhavi, Mōhana, Kuraṅgi and Bhairavi are the other rāga-s featured in the daru-s.

The notation also gives Bēgaḍa and Yadukula Kāmbhōji as rāga-s for two of the dvipada-s<sup>34</sup>. Details of rāga-s in which the poetic verses are to be sung is not mentioned anywhere.

It may be interesting to note that the 12 rāga-s used for the daru-s are mentioned in Sahaji's Rāga Lakṣaṇamu where he gives descriptions of 20 mēḷa-s and 115 janya rāga-s. Between the two rāga-s given for the dvipada-s, Yadukula Kāmbhōji is mentioned in Rāga Lakṣaṇamu<sup>35</sup> while Bēgaḍa is not.

It is noteworthy that the Pantuvarāḷi rāga mentioned by name in Sahaji's Rāga Lakṣaṇamu is given under the Sindhurāmakriya mēḷa with sādharāṇa gāndhāra<sup>36</sup> and not antara gāndhāra as is sung in current practice. Prof. Sambamoorthy's notation is in concurrence with the Pantuvarāḷi as it is sung today with antara gāndhāra<sup>37</sup>.

Featuring Pantuvarāḷi raga for maṅgalam is a practice that is very different from conventions that are currently followed.

Thirty years after the documentation of the prabandha, Smt R. Vedavalli sang this gēyanāṭaka based on Prof. Sambamoorthy's notation and presented it in 1983 in Krishna Gana Sabha, Chennai. Dance-musical presentations of the prabandha too have been performed. In 2010 and subsequently in 2012, Smt R. Vedavalli and her disciples brought out the complete melodic version of the prabandha in the form of a CD, with vocal and orchestra, accompanied by a book with the text, transliteration in Roman script and essays on different aspects of the prabandha. This project was produced by Dr. Annapurna Mamidipudi and Sumathi Krishnan, and the book was published by C.P.R. Publications<sup>38</sup>.

The author of this essay was blessed to have been a part of this production by her Guru. Smt Vedavalli's intuitive approach, nuances in the melodic interpretation of the notation, changes that were incorporated based on the reference of prevailing poetic/lyrical traditions (in the case of the daru '*kadalimpakurōyipallaki*' — the gati was modified to tīśra though

34 Ibid.p.24 & p.35.

35 Ed. Seetha.S.1990. Rāga Lakṣaṇamu of Sāha Mahārāja. p.95. Brhaddhvani. Madras.

36 Ibid.pp.116-118.

37 Sambamoorthy.P.1955. Pallaki Seva Prabandham: Telugu Opera of Shahaji Maharajah (1684-1710).p.33, p.48, p.50 & p.73. Indian Music Publishing House.Madras.

38 Pallaki Seva Prabandham: An Opera by Sahaji Maharaja. 2012. p.53. C.P.R. Publications. C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation. Chennai.

notation was in caturaśra), make this melodic version of the Pallaki sēva prabandha a listeners' delight.

The author of this article gave a lecdem presentation on this prabandha, accompanied by orchestral rendition of excerpts from the work by students of the Advanced School of Carnatic Music (ASCM), Music Academy Madras, on 24<sup>th</sup> December 2022 in the 96<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Music Academy Madras<sup>39</sup>. This article includes points discussed in the above-mentioned presentation, with an emphasis on the literary and musical aspects of the Pallaki sēva prabandha.

A glimpse into the movement of the palanquin of Gaurī śaṅkara pallaki sēva prabandha of Sahaji through the different eras, and stories of how the saṅgita and sāhitya of this work have been preserved and handed down, is fascinating on the one hand, and instructive on the other. It offers interesting perspectives on how continuity and change interact with each other, with names and terms playing a complex and critical role — faithful to the continuum, while facilitating the change needed for its creative transmission.

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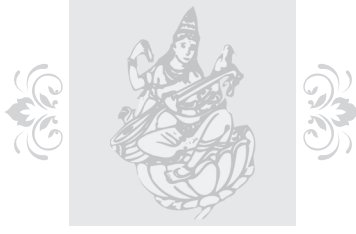
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39 <https://youtu.be/x4NSieV2Z7k>



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## Vīṇa Vidvān Brahmasri A. Ananthakrishna Iyer His Compositions

**Revathi Sadasivam**

*Vainika, Teacher at Sri Guruguha Gana Vidyalaya, Bangalore.*

*Avid interest in Dikshitar kṛti-s*

### Early Life

Anantharaman Ananthakrishna Iyer was born in the Tamil month of Āni, star Pūrāḍam in 1899, at Kallidaikurichi in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu to R. Anantharaman and Champakavalli. He had four brothers and a sister; he was the second among six children.

Ananthakrishna Iyer's father, R. Anantharaman was practising vaidikam – leading a priestly life. He was proficient in Sanskrit and Vēda-s and was a Sanskrit vidvān in the samasthānam of the Rāja of Kochi. Therefore, it is not surprising that his second son, A. Ananthakrishna Iyer also took to vaidikam after learning Veda-s and Upaniṣad-s. Many Brahmins used to



Kallidaikuruchi A. Ananthakrishna Iyer (1899-1959)

learn the Vēda-s at the vēdapāṭhaśāla in Kallidaikurichi and later on move to Kerala to practise vaidikam as there was a dearth of good priests there.

As a boy, Ananthakrishna Iyer attained considerable mastery over the Sanskrit language, picked up other languages like Tamil, Malayalam, Grantha and Telugu and also learnt astrology.

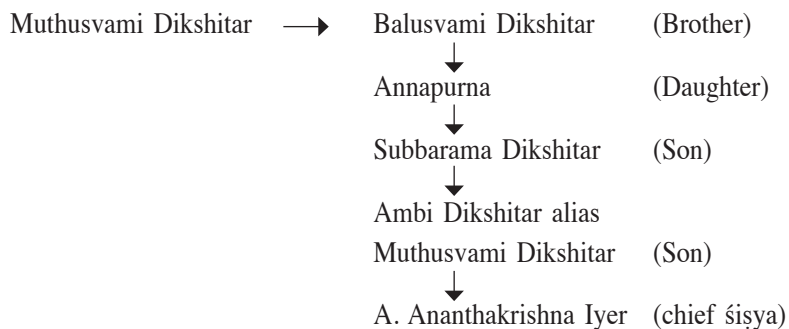
### **Link with Muthusvami Dikshitar's family**

Muthusvami Dikshitar, one of the Trinity of Carnatic music, was born in Tiruvarur in 1775. He was a śrividya upāsaka, a true Advaitin, well-versed in Sanskrit, the Vēda-s, tantra śāstra and mantra śāstra. Through his songs, he worshipped the different deities at different shrines. He was a Vaiṇika Gāyaka and has left behind a treasure chest of wonderful kṛti-s. Muthusvami Dikshitar died at Ettayapuram in 1835. His brother Balusvami Dikshitar spent most of his time at Ettayapuram under the patronage of the Maharaja and after him, his grandson Subbarama Dikshitar continued to live there. Subbarama Dikshitar carried on the legacy of Muthusvami Dikshitar and authored the celebrated work, Saṅgīta Sampradāya Pradarśini. After his demise in 1906, his son Ambi Dikshitar, also called Muthusvami Dikshitar, became the court musician of the Ettayapuram samasthānam. He carried on the propagation of Dikshitar kṛti-s started by his father.

### **Anantha Krishna Iyer's musical journey**

Meanwhile in 1916, an interesting event took place in the life of young Ananthakrishna Iyer who was barely 16 years old. Piqued at an insult meted out to him when he had gone to perform brahminical rites at a wealthy man's house, Ananthakrishna Iyer put down his stack of dharba grass and vowed never to return to the profession again. Frustrated, he decided to rest on the tiṇṇai or pyol of a townhouse. When the lady of the house opened the door, found him there, and spoke to him, she realised that the youngster was knowledgeable and eager to learn music. She happened to be none other than Ammalu Ammal, the eldest daughter of Ambi Dikshitar. It was she who initiated Ananthakrishna Iyer into Carnatic music. Ammalu Ammal found that the lad showed promise and was a devoted and diligent person. She therefore took him to her father Ambi Dikshitar and beseeched him to take the boy as his disciple. Thus began Ananthakrishna Iyer's journey into music, and he came to be known as belonging to the direct śiṣya paramparā of Nāḍajyōti Muthusvami Dikshitar.

### The śiṣya paramparā tree



### Gurukulavāsam

In 1916 Ananthakrishna Iyer started his gurukulavāsam under Ambi Dikshitar at Ettayapuram. As per the condition of his guru, Ananthakrishna Iyer vowed to look after him and his family till his last years, which he did. Ananthakrishna Iyer learnt both vocal and vīṇā, as was the tradition of the Dikshitar school. He adhered to the Gāyakī bāṇi, in which the sāhitya was given utmost importance. This again reveals the style of their master Vainika Gāyaka, Nādayōti Muthusvami Dikshitar. Ananthakrishna Iyer was fortunate to learn several rare as well as well-known, big and small kṛti-s of Muthusvami Dikshitar from his guru Ambi Dikshitar. We can thus say that the authentic pāṭhāntara of the Dikshitar parampara was passed on to Ananthakrishna Iyer.

Around this time there were a lot of musicians at Kallidaikurichi in Tirunelveli district. One such musician of high calibre was Saṅgīta Kalānidhi Vedanta Bhagavatar, brother-in-law of Ananthakrishna Iyer and a well-known Harikatha exponent. Ananthakrishna Iyer and Vedanta Bhagavatar used to spend a lot of time together singing Dikshitar kṛti-s. It was from Vedanta Bhagavatar that Ananthakrishna Iyer took Śrividya mantra upadēśa. Together they presented a musical discourse titled ‘Lalitōpākhyānam’, relating to Goddess Lalita, which comprised rare kṛti-s of Muthusvami Dikshitar on the said theme. The duo staged this again many years later in Calcutta.

### Move to Madras

In order to propagate Dikshitar kṛti-s, Ananthakrishna Iyer persuaded his guru Ambi Dikshitar to relocate to Madras, which had become the main centre for Carnatic music. Accordingly, they moved to Madras in 1919. Ananthakrishna Iyer found a suitable accommodation for his guru and his family in Komaleeswaran Pettai. Three years later in 1922, they moved to Big Street in Triplicane and established a music school called Dikshita Sangeetha Kala

Salai, which was inaugurated on Vijayadaśami day by Lady Mangalambal Sadhasiva Iyer. Around 1927, Ambi Dikshitar had to move to Ettayapuram as desired by the Maharaja, but he came back to Madras in 1931.

While Ambi Dikshitar was teaching in Madras, he had many disciples, the prime one being Ananthakrishna Iyer. Other notable disciples were Saṅgīta Kalānidhi-s T.L. Venkatarama Iyer, Harikesanallur L. Muthiah Bhagavata, D.K. Pattammal and Vedanta Bhagavata, as also the brother of the last-named Ramalinga Bhagavata, and Mahadeva Bhagavata. Ananthakrishna Iyer's younger brother Sundaram Iyer and sister Bhagavathi learnt from Ambi Dikshitar and also from their elder brother Ananthakrishna Iyer.

## Establishing a school at Madras

Around 1934, Ananthakrishna Iyer and his brother Sundaram Iyer established The Karnataka Vainika Gana Vidyalaya at No.10, Royapettah High Road, Madras, with branches in Mylapore and Mambalam. One of his disciples was Kalpakam Swaminathan.

Ambi Dikshitar attained the lotus feet of God on 3rd June 1936 and the task of carrying on his work fell to his chief śiṣya, A. Ananthakrishna Iyer who paid tribute saying, "My Guru was a Śrividya upāsaka, a man with self-respect, who cared little for fame and wealth".

"Yāmpetra inbam peruga ivvaiyagam" — with this selfless motive of sharing, Ananthakrishna Iyer, along with his brother, brought out his first book on music called 'Gāna Maṅjuṣā' in 1934. His next big venture was the publication of Śrī Kamalāmba Navāvaraṇa kṛti-s in the book 'Guruguha Gānāmṛtavaraṣiṇī'. Yet another book was Dikshitar's Navagraha series brought out in 1937. These two books were jointly edited by Vedanta Bhagavata and Ananthakrishna Iyer. The first book contains a foreword by Ambi Dikshitar himself in which he has written, "*With my blessings, my chief śiṣya A. Ananthakrishna Iyer, who is residing in Chennai for some years, has learned vīṇā and vocal music from me and is a great musician. He sings in the same way as I have taught him, akin to the traditional singing in our Parampara.*" According to oral accounts, both Vedanta Bhagavata and Ananthakrishna Iyer literally burnt the midnight oil to bring out these books.

## Move to Calcutta

When G.V. Raman, a close friend of Ananthakrishna Iyer in Madras, was posted to Calcutta, he persuaded Ananthakrishna Iyer to come along with his family to the city as he considered him as his 'Parama Guru'. Ananthakrishna Iyer agreed and moved to Calcutta. Hearing about Ananthakrishna Iyer's background, the South Indian community in Calcutta came forward to learn music from him. It is said that the divine grace of Goddess Kali made

him rethink about going back to Madras and instead Ananthakrishna Iyer decided to settle down in Calcutta.

## His family

Ananthakrishna Iyer and his wife Meenakshi had five children. The eldest was A. Anantharaman, followed by four daughters Saraswathi, Champakavalli, Kamala, and Kameshwari. His children were initiated into music at an early age, especially Dikshitar kṛti-s and were equally adept at playing instruments of their liking.

## Move to Banaras

In 1940, the families of G.V. Raman and Ananthakrishna Iyer moved to Banaras (Kasi) and lived there till 1943 as Calcutta had become a virtual war zone due to the Japanese bombings related to the Second World War. Destiny seems to have brought Ananthakrishna Iyer to Varanasi, the holy town on the banks of the river Ganga, where young Muthusvami Dikshitar had spent many years and learnt tantra śāstra, and mantra śāstra from his guru Chidambaranatha Yogi. It was from the river Ganga that the mystic vīṇā appeared in his hands. Ananthakrishna Iyer along with his śiṣya-s regularly sang the Kasi kṣētra kṛti-s of Muthusvami Dikshitar like Ēhi Annapūrṇē, Śrī Viśvanātham, Gangē māmpāhi, Mādhavam bhajēham in Dēvamanohari and others.

It is said that Ananthakrishna Iyer would visit the temples of Lord Viswanatha and Goddess Annapurna regularly and he tuned the Annapūrṇāṣṭakam, Śrī Viśwanātha aṣṭakam, Gangā stōtram and taught them to his students. He used to regularly perform pūja to Chakralingesvarar, who was once worshipped by Muthusvami Dikshitar. It was in Kasi that Ananthakrishna Iyer composed the kṛti Śītalāmbām sadābhajēham in the rāga Vasantā.

## Sri Guruguha Gana Vidyalaya

On his return to Calcutta, Ananthakrishna Iyer and his family settled down at 19 Bipin Pal Road in South Calcutta which became a landmark location for the students of Carnatic music. It was here that he established the Sri Guruguha Gana Vidyalaya on Saturday, 23rd November 1943. The students were taught vocal, vīṇā, violin and mridangam free of cost. Ananthakrishna Iyer too was a Śrividya upāsaka and would immerse himself in his daily pūja. He conducted the Navāvaraṇa pūja and guided many who sought his advice regarding religious matters.

## Visit to Nepal

Ananthakrishna Iyer also happened to visit Nepal along with His Holiness Sri Sankaracharya of Govardhana Mutt of Puri and composed Paśupatiśvaram bhajēham — a rāgamālikā in

praise of Lord Pasupatinath of Nepal. Ananthakrishna Iyer served him during his stay in Nepal and later in 1956, the Swamiji composed 64 Sanskrit verses and in some of them there is mention of Muthusvami Dikshitar, Ambi Dikshitar and his disciple Ananthakrishna Iyer. These were published along with a foreword by His Holiness in the Abhayāmbā Navāvaraṇam book brought out by A. Ananthakrishna Iyer.

In the verses 53 to 55 Swamiji says, Sri Ananthakrishna Iyer has been aiming at and striving towards the upliftment of the devoted souls through the instrumentality of the Dikshitar compositions, extolling various Gods and Goddesses and resplendent with sublime expositions of the mysteries of the mantra śāstra and the quintessence of the Vēda-s and Upaniṣad-s. He has enlisted the full cooperation of another great master of music and literature named Sri Vedanta Bhagavatar and is putting forth his earnest and strenuous endeavours towards the speedy publication of the compositions.

In verse 56 he says, “We bestow our own benedictions and pray to the all-giving deities to bless him (Sri Ananthakrishna) with long life, free from illness, full of superlative joy, spotless in character, to ensure for him the attainment of happiness here and of Moksha hereafter”.

### **As an editor**

Ananthakrishna Iyer wanted to propagate Carnatic music among the people, and he got this opportunity when he was invited to become the editor of a monthly journal called ‘Jyoti’. Since Ananthakrishna Iyer was in charge of the music section, he brought out around 28 musical compositions, some rare kṛti-s of Dikshitar and some varṇa-s. He published most of them with word to word meaning, notation and kalpana svara-s. The journal contains an article written by Ananthakrishna Iyer, titled, ‘The Greatness of Music and My Wish’ in which he talks about Nāda vidyā and learning of saṅgīta śāstra, the evolution of music as seen from Saṅgīta Ratnākara to Caturdaṇḍi Prakāśikā. He also talks about the sūladi tāḷa-s of Purandaradasa, the aṣṭapadī-s of Jayadeva, and how the music sampradāya has been carrying on for centuries.

He says that the compositions of the Trinity which are widely sung and enjoyed, followed the lakṣaṇa gīta-s of Venkatamakhi. One should read his grantha-s to realise their importance and the music fraternity is indebted to this mahān and should celebrate Venkatamakhi Day! He also mentions the difficulties faced by the teacher as well as the students of music. It is strange that his observations, made 65 years ago, still hold true to this day.

In another interesting essay named ‘Guru Śiṣya Samvādam, he presents a question-and-answer section and clarifies many doubts that arise about music in the minds of the common man as well as music students.

## As a teacher

Ananthakrishna Iyer conducted Dikshitar Aradhana Utsavam during Deepavali where all the students were given a chance to perform and offer saṅgītāñjalī to Muthusvami Dikshitar. His teaching methodology was very unique and interesting, and comprised the following:

1. Discussing the meaning of a kṛti and associated incidents if any.
2. The rāga lakṣaṇa before teaching the kṛti.
3. Splitting the words in the right places to ensure the right meaning.
4. Making the students notate the kṛti.
5. Rendering of kṛti-s with sāhitya bhāva and bhakti bhāva.
6. Akāra practice for vocalists. Learning of gīta-s and prabandha-s. Citta tānam practice especially for vīṇā students to familiarize them with the tāra sthāyī and ati-tāra sthāyī.
7. He composed around 25 rāga sanchāra-s in common and rare rāga-s. They were set in different tāla-s and some in different speeds. For example, Gauḷa Maṇirangu, Suruttī and Megharanji.

## As a composer

Ananthakrishna Iyer had a flair for composing and prodded by circumstances, he composed a few songs.

### Insights into his compositions:

1. Hē Kālī (Varnam) : rāga – Kharaharapriya, tāla – Rūpaka.

This is a varṇa in Telugu.

Context – The Divine Grace of goddess Kali made him settle down in Calcutta. As a symbol of his gratitude, he composed this varṇa on Kali.

Meaning – Hey Kali! I have taken refuge in you! Give me fruitfulness in all my endeavours. Show compassion to me.

The svara passages have a lot of interesting patterns like dhātu svara-s, yati-s like, P DP NDP SNDP and jāru gamaka-s which are so suitable to the vīṇā like P,dns –R,gmp, etc.

2. Śītalāmbām: rāga – Vasanta, tāla – Mīśra Cāpu.

This is a kṛti composed in Sanskrit.

Context – During his stay in Banaras, small pox, a dreaded disease broke out. It is a belief that if one prays to Goddess Sitala (means ‘cooling’) one can be cured. So, he composed this kṛti.



## Hē Kālī composed by Ananthakrishna Iyer

ராகம்:—கரஹரப்ரியா

22வது மேளம்

தாளம்:—ரூபகம்

ப: நி த நி க் க ஸ் நி த ப ம க ரி | நி ஸ ரி க மா, த ப ம ப த || ம நி த ப நீ த  
 ஹே - - கா - - னீ - - - - - | நீ - - - வே க - - து - || ய - னி - நே ர  
 நி ஸ் ரி ஸ் நி | த ப ம க ரி கா ம ப ம ப த || நி தா நி ஸ் நி ரீ ஸ்ா ||  
 நம் - - - - | - - மி - - நா - - - னு - || ஹே - கா - - னீ - - ||  
 அ: ஸ் நி த ப ம ப நி த ப ம க ரி | ம க ரி ஸ நி த நி ஸ ரி க மா ||  
 ஸ - க - ல - ப - ல - மு - | லோ - ஸ - கு - து - வ - னு ||  
 நி த நி ஸ் நி ஸ் ம் க் க ஸ்ா ப | ஸ்ா, நி த ப க் க ஸ் ஸ் நி த ||  
 ஸ - - டா - - நீ - - - ப | தாம் பு - - ஜ - - மு - னு ||

சிட்டஸ்வரம்

பா, தா, நீ, தா ப | மா, கா, ரீ, க ம ப || மா, பா, தா, நி ஸ் ரி |  
 க் க ஸ் நி த நி ஸ் நி த ப த || நி ஸ் ரி க் கா க் க் ம் க் க ஸ் ரி | க் ம்ா ரி க்ா ஸ் ரீ நி ஸ்ா ||  
 ரி ஸ் நி த ப ஸ் நி த ப ம நி த | ப ம க ரி நி ஸ ரி கா ம ப த || (ஹேகாளீ)

46

ச: ஸ்ா நி த ப ம க ரி | ஸ நி ஸா, ரி க மா ப த நீ ||  
 ஏ கா - - - க்ஷ ரி | த - ய ஸே - - யு - மு ||  
 2) ஸ்ா, ரி ரி ஸ் ஷை | ஷை ||  
 ஏ - - - ஷை | ஷை ||

ஸ்வரம்

- 1) கா, ம க ரி | ஸா, நி த நி || ஸா, ரி க ம | பா, நி த நி || (ஏகாக்ஷரி)
- 2) ம ப த நி த ப ம க ரி கா ம | பா ம ப த நி ஸ் ரி க் க ஸ் ரி ||  
 க் ம் ரி க் ம் க் ரி ஸ் நி த ப ம | பா த நி ஸ் ரீ க ம ப த நி || =
- 3) தாநிஸ் ஸ்நிதப மதா ப|பமகரி குமா மகரிஸரி ||நீஸ தாநிஸரி புரதநி|  
 ஸாரிகம கமாபதநிஸ் ||பாதநீஸ்ரி க்மா ரி க் ஸ் ரி க்ா ரி ஸ் நி த நி  
 ஸ்ா நி || த நி த ப ரி ஸ் நி த ப ஸ் நி த | ப ம நி த ப ம க மா ப த நி || =
- 4) ஸ்ாநித நிதபாத நிஸ்ரி | க்ரி ஸ்ாநி ரி ஸ்நி தநித ப ||ாமகரி காமபதப  
 நிதப ஸ்நிதபம காமரீக || ஸாரிநீஸதநி புரத நி |, ஸ நிஸரி ஸாரிகம  
 ரீ || க ம ப த நீ த நீ ஸ் ரி ஸ் | ரி க்ா ம் க் ரி ஸ் நி த ப த நி || =

## Śrī Śītalāmbām composed by Ananthakrishna Iyer

கூகம்:—வஸந்த

தாளம்:—மிஸ்ரசாப்ட

ப: ஸ்ரீ நி த ம கா | ஸா தா, ம க ரி ஸா || நீ த நிஸாஸ | க ரி க மா, த நீ ||  
 ஸீ தளா ம்பா ம் | ஸ தா ப ஜே - ஹம் || ஸிஷ் ட ஜ நா திபூ - ஜிதாம்வராம் ||  
 மதா நீ ஸ் ரி ஸ்ர நி த நி ஸ்ர | மா க் ரி ஸ் க் ரி ஸ் நி த ம த நீ ||  
 மா - ரீரோ - க ப்ர ஸ ம ஸீம் | மாணி - க்ய மா - லா - தா - ரிணீம் ||

2) ஸ் ம் க் ரி ஸ் நி ஸ் நி த ம க ம த நி | ஸ்ர நி தா ம க ம க ரி ஸா || நி நி ஸ ஸா ||  
 ஸீ - - - த - ளா - - ம்பா - - ம் | ஸ - தா ப ஜே - - ஹம் || - - - - ||

அ: ம த நீ ஸ்ர ஸ் | த நி ஸ்ர ஸ் நி த ம கா ||  
 ஹி த லோகோ ப | கா - ராம் தீ - ரா - ம் ||

நி ஸ் த நி ம த நி | தா, ம கா மா க ம த நி ஸ் ரி ||  
 ஹே - மா ம் ப ர த | ராம் அ ப ய க - ரா - - ம் ||

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ச: த தா த நி த ம | க ரீ ஸா, ம க மா || நி த மா த நீ | ஸ்ர நி ஸ் நி த ம |  
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க ரி ஸா நி த நி ஸ ர ம கா மா | க ம த நி நி த ஸ் நி த ம த நி ஸ்ர ||  
 கா - ஸீ ந க ர : ப்ர ஸித்தாம் | க வி ஜ ன னு த ஸிம் - ம் ஹா - ரூ - டாம் ||

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சிட்டஸ்வரம்

ஸ்ர ரி ஸ் க் ரி ஸ்ர நி தா நி த ம | கா, மா, தா, நீ ம த நி ||  
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Meaning – In the pallavi, “Māri rōga praśamanīm, Māṇikya mālā dhārīṇīm”, describes the Goddess as wearing a beautiful garland of rubies and she cures infectious diseases like smallpox. She holds the abhaya mudra, she likes music (“Gīta rasānandinī”). By curing diseases, she gives good health and longevity, thereby bringing happiness to mankind. As She is the deity of the Spring season, the kṛti is aptly set in rāga Vasanta!

In this kṛti, we find svarākṣara in (SA DA bhajēham), rāga mudra (vasantam), kṣētra mudra (Daśāśvamedha Ghāt in Kasi), his āṅkita nāma (Guruguha Dāsa). This kṛti has three madhyama kāla-s and a ciṭṭa svaram. This composition shows the influence of Dikshitar kṛti-s on Ananthakrishna Iyer.

### 3. Ekāmreśam : rāga – Tōḍi, tāla – Ādi.

In this kṛti, Ekāmreśam Kāmākṣīśam, he sings of Lord Śiva of Siddhanallur, a temple built by his friend G.V. Raman’s family. In this song he mentions the family gōtram, that is, Bhāradvāja gōtram.

### 4. Valli Devasenāpaté: rāga – Khamās, tāla – Rūpaka.

This kṛti in Tamil about Lord Muruga has a beautiful chittasvaram. It talks about the valour of Lord Muruga and brings out the vīra rasa. In this composition, Ananthakrishna Iyer’s mudra appears in the line – ‘Unnai dinamum tuthiḱkum unthan bhaktan Guruguha Dāsan’.

### 5. Paśupatiśvaram: rāgamālika, tāla – Rūpaka.

During his trip to Nepal with His Holiness Sankaracharya of Govardhana Mutt, Puri, he composed Paśupatiśvaram bhajēham, on Lord Pasupatinath. It is set in five Hindustāni rāga-s. In this kṛti, his āṅkita nāma Guruguha Dāsa and kṣētra mudra which is Nepal on the banks of river Bhagumati (viśāla Nepāla deśa, Bhāgumati taṭasthitam), and the important festival of Śivarātri which is celebrated here, are also mentioned.

He has also retuned the kṛti Śiva gurunāthanē (rāga Mukhāri composed by Eddappa Venkateswara Maharaja), in rāga Sindhuhairavī, it closely resembles Rabindra Saṅgīt. This shows the influence of local music on him.

## Books published

The music community is indebted to Ananthakrishna Iyer for compiling these books containing the kṛti-s of Muthusvami Dikshitar. But for his efforts, most of the kṛti-s would not have come to light.



List of books published (from Calcutta)

1. Saṅgīta Bāla Bōdhini (for Beginners)
2. Abhayāmbā Navāvaraṇam
3. Śiva Navāvaraṇam
4. Rāma Navāvaraṇam
5. Kṛṣṇa Navāvaraṇam
6. Navagraha Kīrtanaṅgaḷ

Since he learned directly from Ambi Dikshitar, the kṛti-s have been preserved in their pristine form. As some of his books were published as early as 1936 it can be said that they are one of the earliest ones containing Dikshitar kṛti-s to be published after the Saṅgīta Sampradāya Pradarśini.

According to oral accounts, He was very good at playing tānam-s on the vīṇā and the ‘mīṭu’ techniques (plucking) employed were pleasing to the ears.

## The next generation

A. Anantharaman, the eldest son of Ananthakrishna Iyer, was fondly known as Ambi Sir. After his father’s demise in 1959 he took charge of the Vidyalaya and followed the path set by his father and his guru.

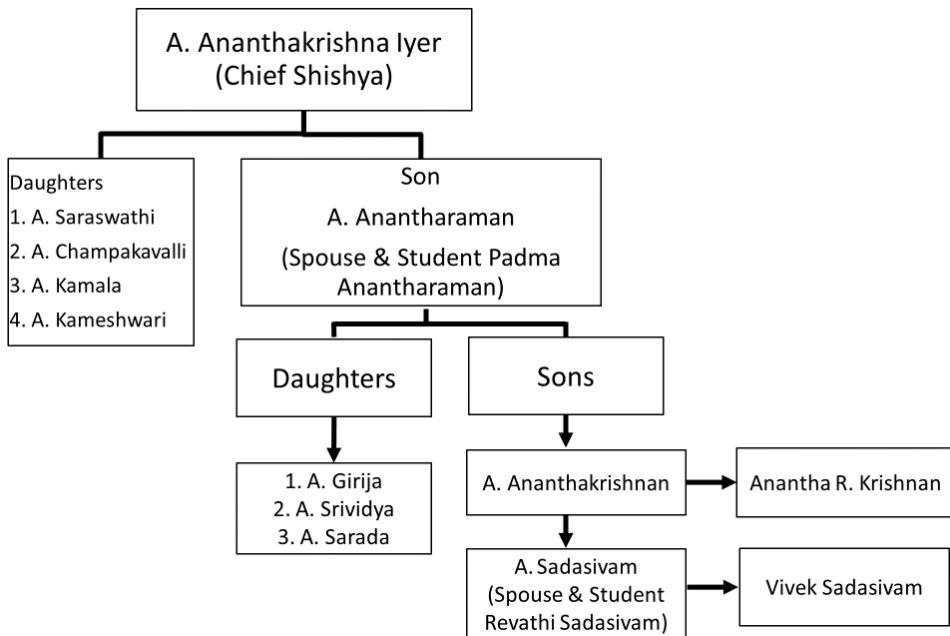
He was very good at playing the vīṇā and had a good voice and could also play the violin. He was a friendly and unassuming person, popular with all his students. He was ably assisted by his sister A. Champakavalli, who was called “Teacher” by all. They both strived hard to make good musicians out of the talented students and the popularity of the Vidyalaya grew by leaps and bounds. Many rare kṛti-s came to light and the school became an authority on Dikshitar kṛti-s. Both Anantharaman and Champakavalli received awards for excellence in teaching from many institutions in Calcutta and Madras. The student community of Calcutta will be indebted to them forever.

Ananthakrishna Iyer attained the Lotus feet of the Lord, on 5th January 1959. He is fondly remembered as “Periya Sir”, of the Vidyalaya. It can be rightly said that Brahmasri Ananthakrishna Iyer was a true visionary who tirelessly worked to bring out the compositions of Nāda Jyōti Muthusvami Dikshitar.

Ananthakrishna Iyer was not only responsible for bringing Carnatic music to Calcutta but also for the propagation of the vīṇā by teaching the students there to play this ancient

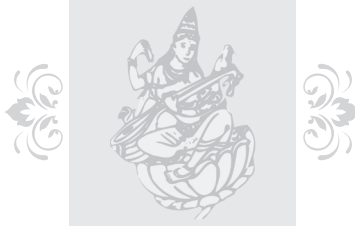
instrument. The music fraternity would always be indebted to him for his manifold contributions in this respect.

To sum up, bringing to light a number of rare *kṛti*-s of Dikshitar from manuscripts, publication of books to spread Dikshitar *kṛti*-s, establishing a landmark institution for music in the eastern part of India, training thousands of students by teaching music, laying a strong foundation to ensure continuity of this great mission started by him through his own family members and students, reflects Ananthakrishna Iyer's invaluable contribution as a *śiṣya* of the Muthusvami Dikshitar parampara. The Vidyalaya is now 80 years old. His granddaughter A. Srividya continues to teach at Kolkata.



His grandchildren — A. Ananthakrishnan, A. Sadasivam, Sarada, and great-grandchildren are also continuing his legacy of propagating music.



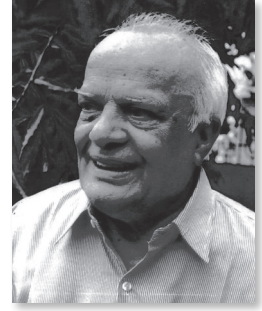


## Dr. Balantrapu Rajanikanta Rao's contribution to Dance, Literature and Music

**Sreemathi Ramnath**

*Communications Expert, Media Person and Telugu literary scholar*

This article serves as a peek into the many-faceted genius – and the multi-directional contribution – of Balantrapu Rajanikanta Rao as a musicologist, music historian, lyricist, composer, broadcaster, children's song writer and, perhaps most significantly, as a modern-day 'Vāggeyakāraka'.



### Early years

Born into a family of poets and scholars on 29 January 1920, in Nidadavole, East Godavari District, it is no wonder Rajani's tryst with literature began as early as it did. His father, Balantrapu Venkata Rao, one half of the famed Venkata Parvatheeswara



*Rajani on the left; on the extreme right is Tanguturi Suryakumari.  
Source: Rajani Athmakatha Vibhavarī*

Kavulu duo, was the pioneer of the modern Telugu literary epoch known as Madhura Bhakti. The young Rajani was, naturally, initiated by his father into the field of creative writing very early, perennially audience to literary discussions and readings even as a school-going boy in Pithapuram. After completing his higher education at P.R. College, Kakinada, Rajani completed his B.A. (Hons) from Andhra University

in the year 1940, with Telugu and Sanskrit as his main subjects. This would define his career.

## Musical and aesthetic foundations



*Rajani on the right with  
Smt. Balasaraswathi.  
Source: Muvvagopala Padavali*

Renowned singer and compiler of folk music, Dr. Vinjamuri Avasarala Anasuya Devi, writes in her biography about her first encounter with Rajani the boy. All of eight or nine years old, a shirtless Rajani would accost her in the front yard of her home and challenge her to play the harmonium in the way he stipulated. That was the only play the young boy knew, for Rajani's entire world was built on the foundation of – and filled with – music and words.

Rajani mentions in several conversations his first music lessons from his maternal uncle Duggirala Pallamraju. From him he learnt the art of reciting padyam-s (metric verse) and the basics of rāga-s. Later on, lessons from Ramanayya in his early college days would stand him in good stead as he sought to expand and deepen his knowledge under the tutelage of great guru-s like Thumarada Sangameswara Sastri and Veena Dhanammal.

Rajani was exposed to brilliant minds – thought leaders, musicians, and writers – at this time, and he grew up steeped in music, perennially attending the concerts at the Kakinada Saraswathi Gana Sabha. His intellectual curiosity knew no bounds, and his creative juices were coursing through his veins; he started writing lyrical verses regularly even before he was 20. It was in his Intermediate days itself that his musical genius was recognized, and he was awarded the Shanta Sankar Medal, a prize given to the best singer in collegiate music competitions. This would mark the beginning of a long career of wide recognition.

Around this time, as Rajani's peerless musical skill and literary imagination began coming to the fore, the dynamic young student was assigned the task of writing and presenting a song to mark the inauguration of a new auditorium, Tikkavarapu Ramireddi Hall, in his college in Kakinada. Thus, the 16-year-old Rajani donned his writer-composer-conductor hat; the college choir sang "Pasidimerungulathalathalalu" – an ode to "Telugu thalli". The song has proven its timelessness, celebrated till date as a beautiful tribute to the mother of Telugu land. So evocative was the piece and so excited the Vice Chancellor, Rajani recalls, that he too joined the chorus. Along with "Pasidimerungula" was born an "Ādhunika Vāggeyakāraka".

Rajani's openness to, and interest in, a wide range of genres, and his adoption of musical features from across regions in his work have their foundation in his syncretic approach to art from his childhood. He narrates on different occasions his escaping with his bookbag on his back to the physics lab where his lecturer would be listening to music on an assembled radio. That is where he first heard artists like Heerabai Barodekar of Bombay, Ustad Faiyaz Khan of Lucknow, Khan Sahib Abdul Karim Khan, and became acquainted with and developed a taste for Khayāl-s and Gīt-s.

These diverse sounds would go on to serve as inspiration in his musical career. His openness combined with his taste eclecticism reflected in his compositions, with him playing with musical elements and styles alien to his own. In an interview, he insisted he had no preference; the craft of composition merely required that he chose an idiom that was authentic to the character singing and the context in which the song was embedded.

There are several examples of this belief of his and the creative philosophy that drove him to work the way he did; the chartbuster film song "Oho Pāvurama" from the film Swargaseema with its comely Arabic tune is one such. Other examples are "Oho Vibhāvari" with a distinctive Bengali slant in the musical articulation of his own lyrics which became synonymous with Rajani's name. His music for the Radio Feature "Atithisala" written by the famous poet Devulapalli Krishna Sastri on the life of Omar Khayyam had a strong Persian flavour which lent the feature great authenticity.

### **An interesting anecdote**

The young Rajani's interest in diverse artistic forms, coupled with his prowess in music and erudition, were all on display when the then honorary President of the Vizianagaram Maharaja Music College, the renowned Dwaram Venkataswamy Naidu invited the young 29-year-old Rajani to give a performance. Rajani sang songs in Arabic, Persian, Marathi, and the Carnatic style with equal ease, and all of them very well received. What made the evening special was how the legendary violinist Dwaram put together an unusual Vote of Thanks; he played back almost all the tunes that Rajani sang, imitating his singing. This, Rajani writes, was one of the most valuable displays of appreciation he ever received.

### **Contribution to the field of music, dance and literature:**

#### **1. Āndhra Vāggeyakāra Caritramu (1958)**

Rajani's time as a student paved the way for his contributions to the Telugu literary and musical field. Pithapuram and Kakinada, where he studied, were the bedrock of the Andhra renaissance movement, fertile with creativity, spilling over with thought leaders and iconic musical geniuses. This environment provided the nurturing soil in these defining years



of his life; at the young age of 17, Rajani began his research on the topic of Telugu ‘Vāggeyakāra-s’. Known as Āndhra Vāggeyakāra Caritramu, the work traces and chronicles the evolutionary history of southern Indian musical heritage. This seminal work would go on to win him the Central Sahitya Akademi Award in 1961. Scholars and students alike acknowledge its centrality to the historical study of Andhra’s musical systems; there exists no other comparable comprehensive study till date.

The Andhra Rajani spoke of, however, was not a physical territory alone. He explains early on in his encyclopedic work that “Andhra” in the title referred not to the restrictive geographical meaning of the word, but that it related to the word “Āndhram” – the idea of Teluguness, referring to the people who were Telugu. Given this classification, Telugu composers who lived outside the physical territory of Andhra Pradesh (like Tyagaraja, Tiger Varadachariar, etc.) also feature in his research work. Besides offering biographies and detailing the contributions of individual composers hailing from the area of Andhra and tracing the evolution of the music we know today through various aesthetic and cultural forms, Rajani engages, as only a genius can, with an astonishingly broad bandwidth of several other related topics like Yakṣagāna-s, Bhāgavata mela-s, Kūchipuḍi, and a variety of external influences that touched and shaped the music of the region. I mention below a few chapter titles from the magnum opus for the benefit of non-Telugu readers:

- The evolution of music and Lakṣanakartā-s
- Defining features of a Vāggeyakāra
- Early Yakṣagānakartā-s
- Kūchipuḍi – Siddhendra Yogi
- The golden era of Yakṣagāna pada kartā-s: Contemporaries from Maharashtra
- Harikatha vāggeyakāra-s
- Modern era (1850-1956) Vāggeyakāra-s
- Nāradyaśikṣa — the bridge between Vedic and worldly music
- Sarangadeva’s Saṅgīta Ratnākaram – Pāṭāntaram
- Gāndhāragrāmam – Debate and Solution
- Nāṭya Saṅgīta Vāggeyakāra-s – the Tanjore Quartet
- Tamil Isai – Sangam Era music
- Music in Melattur and Kūchipuḍi Bhāgavata mēla

Unsurprisingly, this wide-ranging book is hailed as a standard reference work for dancers and musicians alike engaging in academic research or aspiring to gain a deeper and comprehensive understanding of all things music and dance.

## 2. Three Monographs and Muvvagopāla Padāvali — a compilation of 150 Kshetrajna Padam-s replete with translation and commentary.

Other notable works by Rajani include monographs on the life and works of Tyagaraja (1976 published by National Book Trust), Kshetraraya (1991), and Ramadasu (1988) which were published by the Central Sahitya Akademi. In a significant contribution to the world of dance, Rajani brought out the book Muvvagōpāla Padāvali (1994): Amours of the Divine Cowherd with Jingling bells, in which 150 padam-s of Kshetrajna have been compiled in the roman script, with poetic English translation and aesthetic notes. These include interpretation, commentary, as well as a definition of the various nāyikā-s in each padam in accordance with the lyric and the mood, proving a valuable handbook for dancers. The launch of the book was, in fact, marked by a special and memorable performance: Padma Bhushan



*Dancer Lakshmi Knight doing the abhinaya for the padam as Smt. Balasaraswathi sings. Rajani (not seen in the picture) was interpreting the Kshetraraya padam. Source: Muvvagopala Padavali*

T. Balasaraswathi sang the Kshetrajna padam *Ninnujūḍa galigene* in the raga Punnāgavarālī, while her daughter Lakshmi Knight performed the abhinaya for the piece, alongside which Rajani read out the interpretation and commentary.

## 3. Madhura Ṣodaśam (1979?)

This is another of Rajani's innumerable contributions to the landscape of the classical arts. The book comprises 16 handpicked Śringāra Kṛtana-s by Annamayya, and are accompanied by transliteration, poetic translation, and aesthetic notes on each of the kṛti-s (commentary and interpretation in some cases). The "sweet sixteen" were compiled by Rajani during his tenure as the Director of Annamacharya Kalakshetram, Tirupati, a time in which he celebrated Annamayya's compositions; he used hitherto rarely used rāga-s like Rasālī and Devasālagam to tune kṛti-s producing solos, duets as well as choral compositions of Annamayya kṛti-s. The weekly performances had an air of celebration about them. Perhaps most significantly, barring one kṛti, which Acharya Rallapalli Ananthakrishna Sarma set to tune in Śankarābharaṇam, all the compositions were set to tune by him:

The chosen padam-s he set to music are:

1. Meluko śringāra raya – Bhūpalam; Ādi taḷa
2. E kulajudainanemi evvadinanemi – also in Bhūpalam
3. Abburampu sissuvu – Mangalakaiśiki
4. Jattigoneraninujavarālu – Āhiri
5. Tirotirojavarāla – Nāṭṭa
6. Yindaramunnāramu – Śrī
7. Chūdachūdamaṇikyalu – Varāḷi
8. Mollalelanāku – Kondamalahari
9. Letha chiguride – Kānaḍa
10. Valacivaccitinenu – Devasālagam
11. Rādantanuntivi – Rītigowḷa
12. Velikivelladu – Kannaḍagowḷa
13. Maruninagaridanda – Kāpinārāyaṇī
14. Cakkadanamulavārāsatulāra- Sāmantam
15. Velagādupovakure – Devagāndhāri
16. Alarulukuriyaga – Śankarābharaṇam alone was tuned by  
Dr. Rallapalli Anantakrishna Sarma

**4. Śatapratrasundarī:** (1955) An anthology of 260 lyrical compositions, this book comprises songs written and set to tune by Rajani. Most of them are from features, plays and yakṣagāna-s that he wrote and broadcast. The book won him the Telugu Bhasha Samithi award. Śatapratrasundarī II appeared in the year 2000.

**5. Viśwa vīṇa (1964) :** A compilation of 18 of his Geyanātika-s or Operas

**6. Jejimamayyapāṭalu:** (1964) Found in every Telugu home, this is a book of children's rhymes and songs written and set to tune by Rajani. Today they are sung by children in several schools.

**7. Rajani Bhāvatarangalu:** (2011) Essays on Art, Literature, Music, Dance Drama and topics range from Annamayya, Kalidasa and Tagore to Mahakavi Sri Sri.

## Leaving his signature on the pages of history

At 27, Rajani created history. On the midnight of 15 August 1947, soon after India listened to Jawaharlal Nehru give his famous speech, "Our Tryst with Destiny," the first ever

Telugu song broadcast in independent India extolled Indians to play the drums of victory, to fly high the tricolour. “Mroyimpu jayabheri”, written, composed and conducted by Rajani, immortalized the historic moment, its dramatic orchestration in tandem with its forceful lyric – “the sun eclipsed by British rule now free to rise” at once moving and jubilant. Tanguturi Suryakumari lent her voice to the composition, the Telugu counterpart of D.K. Pattammal, whose rendition of Bharathi’s “*Āḍuvōme paḷḷu pāḍuvōme*” has gone down in history as heralding the dawn of new India. A year later, to celebrate the first anniversary of independence, Rajani penned and composed yet another patriotic song, “Madi swatantradeśam,” a composition that captured the hearts of Telugu people, soon morphing into a household anthem.

## Broadcaster extraordinaire

Rajani had a natural and deep understanding of the medium called radio. As a broadcaster, he was a trailblazer; with his extraordinary talent with words and music, he explored artistic genres and created works of high quality that held great aspirational value among musicians for decades to come. Rajani spent 36 glorious, prolific years in the broadcasting field. He joined the All India Radio in 1941 and went on to become the station director of AIR-Ahmedabad and AIR-Vijayawada. In his illustrious career, he won several prestigious opportunities to create iconic programmes and garner much international recognition, finally retiring in 1978 as the station director of Bangalore.

A regular visitor to Madras, Rajani’s entry into the world of broadcasting was providential. On one such visit, he accompanied to a party his brother, Nalinikanta Rao, who, along with Durgabai Deshmukh, was helping prepare young women to take the Benaras Metric examination as a part of the Andhra Mahila Sabha’s activities. A star-studded affair, the party was attended by three famous top officers of the All India Radio. Eternally one to burst into song, Rajani sang that evening. The trio was so impressed by his brilliant performance and knowledge, they asked him to drop by at their office next day. Following an audition on 7 January 1941, he was officially made an artist at All India Radio. His progress within the institution was swift: two years later, he was selected to the position of Programme Executive. The rest, as the famous saying goes, was history.

As broadcaster, Rajani initiated, designed, and produced programmes for the All India Radio that were not merely popular, they became an integral part of Andhra’s cultural lore. He incorporated in his many ventures musical features or operas, as well as Bhakti and Lalita saṅgītam, traversing many different genres with ease and grace. His programmes were rooted in – and indeed would become synonymous with – Telugu culture, his works scholarly and packed with artistic value, but always somehow resonating with the erudite and the layman alike.

One of Rajani's most beloved contributions to the AIR was Bhakti Ranjani, a programme intimately intertwined with the everyday lives of Telugu people. Most households in Andhra started their day with Bhakti Ranjani, which featured carefully curated devotional music by composers other than the Trinity, thereby introducing the audience to different styles and content. The most celebrated, high-calibre artistes sang for the programme, including Voleti, Balamuralikrishna, Srirangam Gopalathnam, and many others. So popular was the daily feature, and so ubiquitous the broadcaster's fame, that it began being jokingly referred to as Bhakti Rajani.

Apart from Bhakti Ranjani, Rajani initiated and designed an interactive radio programme called "Dharmasandehalu" hosted by popular Telugu scholars and became the first director to broadcast an Annamacharya kṛti before the 7 o'clock news bulletin every day. He also conceptualized programmes that taught music, thereby recruiting many a new learner into the fold of the classical and its allied forms. "Saṅgīta Śikṣhaṇa" is one such example, with Voleti Venkateswarlu as teacher and Malladi Suribabu as student, two inimitable musical geniuses serving as vehicles of musical instruction to the public.

But Rajani was no mere producer; he also lent his voice to several programmes – "Sūrya stuti," that he wrote, composed and sang, remains a favourite among many a listener even today, his booming voice and drawling style unparalleled. During his tenure at AIR, he both composed and conducted music for Vadyavrinḍa (the national orchestra), AIR-Delhi and Vadyavrinḍa, AIR-Madras. His Viswayanam – the voyage of the universe – that unpacks the secrets of Maṇḍukyopaniṣad along with the complex and established theories of Time Life Continuum, and 'Saṅgīta Gangotri' – a musical composition on the evolution of Indian music – was widely hailed as an original contribution to the fields of musicology and broadcasting. Rajani also won much critical acclaim globally: In 1972, his musical feature, "Kondanunchi Kadalidaka", depicting the trajectory of the river Godavari and the culture it birthed, won him the Japanese Nippon Hoso Kyokai Award. He produced prolifically, his Yakṣagāna-s, ballets and dance dramas leaving their mark both on the performance stage and the broadcast soundscape of southern India.

## **Contribution to light music**

When Information and Broadcast minister B.V. Keskar banned film music from being broadcast in India, an alternative had to be established that both nurtured and fortified the country's heritage. The All India Radio sought to promote regional poetry set to music. This was a golden opportunity for the enormously gifted poet, scholar, singer and composer Rajani, who went on to produce extraordinary programmes comprising musical features (Saṅgīta Rūpakam), as well as independent light songs (Bhāva Gītām-s or Lalita Gītām-s)

that rivalled film music's popularity on the one hand and stood its own against classical music on the other. His first ever broadcast opera was Chandidas, following which he wrote many more that became iconic in the world of Kūchipuḍi dance.

Besides setting literary works by other poets to tune, Rajani himself wrote poetry and worked with master singers like Mangalampalli, Voleti, Saluri Rajeswara Rao, Bezawada Gopalarathnam and Malladi Suribabu. These celebrated artistes lent their voices to memorable numbers that became household songs standing the test of time. The independent songs “Oho Vibhāvāri” and “Challagalilo” became landmarks in the Telugu light music landscape, cherished and sung even today.

Rajani also made Yakṣagāna-s popular. His music for “Vipranārāyaṇa”, based on the life of Thondaradipodi Alwar, and “Kṣīrasāgara Mathanam” written by the legendary poet Devulapalli Krishna Sastry brought the genre of Yakṣagāna closer to the common man.

## Chartbusters in Kūchipuḍi

Rajani, along with Krishna Sastry, made monumental contributions to the field of Kūchipuḍi. The poet-musician duo produced iconic dance dramas that were brought to life through the masterly choreography of guru Vempati Chinna Satyam.

Rajani composed “Kṣīrasāgara Mathanam” for the opening of Siddhendra Kalakshetram in Kūchipuḍi in 1965. The daruvu-s like ‘Podame Rāma’ and ‘Idigo Viśwa Mōhinī’ stole the hearts of dance lovers, scholars and musicians alike. Another living legend Yamini Krishnamurthy played Mohini and Vempati Chinna Satyam himself played the role of Siva in its early years. Rajani also wrote the script for many other dance dramas like Śrī Kṛṣṇa Pārijātam, Menakā-Viśwamitra, Kalyāṇa Śrīnivāsam, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Śaraṇam mama, Vijayostute Nāri, etc. His collaborative work with Vempati Chinna Satyam in particular yielded some extraordinary dance ballets. Some of the popular dance dramas he worked on include: Divya Jyōti (on Buddha), Viśwaviṇa (on Orpheus), Megha Saṇdeśam, Menakā Viśwamitra, Kalyāṇa Śrīnivāsam, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa Śaraṇam mama.

## Contribution to cinema

At the tender age of 21, Rajani was already composing music for films which he subsequently put an end to as he chose to commit his time and energy to do more work in the fields of literature, music and musicology.

The movies he composed music for include:

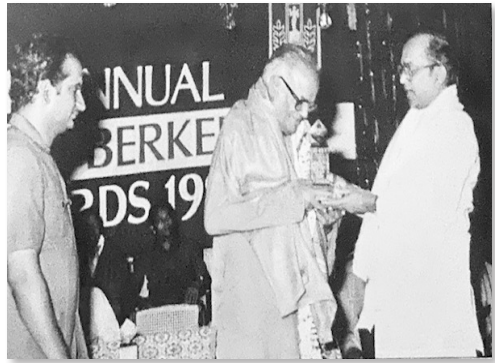
1. Bhale Pelli (1941)



2. Tarumaru (1941)
3. Swargaseema (1945) (songs and music by Rajani: the songs ‘Oho pāvurama’ with its lilting Arabic melody and ‘Oho tapodhanasundara’ sung by Bhanumathi, were super hits.)
4. Gruhapravesam (1946)
5. Lakshmamma (1950)
6. Perantalu (1951)
7. Manavathi (1952) (for this movie Rajani used the rare rāga Rasālī, and the singers were S. Rajam and Srimati Rao Balasaraswathi)
8. Bangaru Papa (1954)
9. Rajamakutam (1959)



*Rajani speaking at the Satapatra Sundari felicitation function. Source: Rajani Athmakatha Vibhavari*



*Being honoured by actor Akkineni Nageswara Rao. Source: Rajani Athmakatha Vibhavari*



## Relentless researcher

As his magnum opus *Āndhra Vāggeyakāra Caritramu* amply demonstrates, Rajani was never satisfied with doing the expected alone; his mind was never at rest, and he was always raring to explore hitherto uncharted territories. This trait made him push boundaries and establish himself as a pioneer in many ways. He is hailed as the first composer who used the *rāga Rasālī* after Tyagaraja, though several composers later followed in his footsteps.

Rajani's research led him to discover that the *rāga Āndhri* that was introduced to India by the people of Andhra during the 4th Century BC bore close resemblance to *Kalyāṇī*. Rajani was inspired to employ it in an orchestral composition as a part of a live programme in 1977 that was broadcast across the nation. This was not the debut of the *rāga*, however; two years prior, at the World Telugu Conference in 1975, Rajani demonstrated its close resemblance to *Kalyāṇī*, using two great singers – Mangalampalli Balamuralikrishna and Voleti Venkateswarlu.

## Translator par excellence

Rajani is credited with giving Telugu people access to literary treasures from other languages. His translations, while being most loyal to the original, allow themselves to be seamlessly transplanted into the Telugu cultural milieu, thus sounding native and natural – the mark of a first-rate translation!

Among his many works, Rajani translated four classical Sanskrit dramas into Telugu. He also translated from Bengali; Tagore's songs were translated and set to tune in the Rabindra Sangeet style. Rajani conducted the AIR orchestra which performed these songs, and then broadcast them.

## Affinity for abstraction

Rajani was inordinately passionate about subjects like Psychology and Astrophysics. His knowledge of *jyotiṣ śāstra* and his curiosity to explore the metaphysical realm are evident in many of his compositions: The perspective he adorns as the song writer in the popular song *Oho Vibhāvāri* is that of a man perched on a planet between the earth and moon. He views his subjects through an intergalactic paradigm; in *Viśwāyaṇam*, his masterpiece of radio production depicting the voyage of the universe, he weaves in theories from Quantum Physics and the secrets from *Maṇḍūkopaniṣad* with great aplomb and elegance that matches both the content and the medium of radio.

## Awards and recognitions

He won several national and state level awards for his works. He is one among the few who received both Sangeet Natak Akademi and Sahitya Akademi awards. He also



received Lifetime achievement awards from the AP state government as well as from other organisations.

After having occupied a firm place in the world of music and literature with extraordinary zeal, Rajani passed away on the 23 April 2018 in Vijayawada. He was sent off with State Honours by the Government of Andhra Pradesh. The shining moon (rajanikānt) on the horizon of Telugu literature and music had set, but its light would forever illuminate the path of artistes to come.

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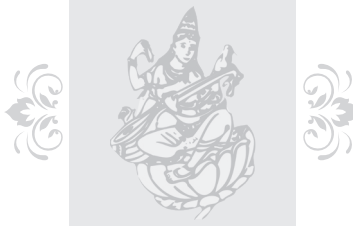
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## Approaching Rakti Rāga-s through Varṇams

**Sriranjani Santhanagopalan**

*Performing Carnatic musician*

### Introduction

In my journey as a performing musician and a student of music, I have learnt to value the musical form “Varṇam” which is often overlooked/dismissed as an “Abhyāsa gānam” or a “Beginner’s lesson”, which has been discarded or forgotten over time. To me, it seems to hold the very DNA or genetic code of a Rāga. Since it is rigid in its structure, with little changes being made to it over time, it lends an objective picture of a rāga. Since the very existence of varṇam-s is to preserve and codify the Rāga Lakṣaṇa, most composers have strived to paint a comprehensive picture of a rāga, incorporating all the important aspects including the sāmānya, lakṣaṇa and viśeṣa prayōga-s.

Varṇam-s also bear the stamp of individuality left by powerful artistes at different points of time in history and hence are a veritable record keeper of the evolution of a rāga over time. This makes them an invaluable tool to approach and understand a formidable category called the “Rakti Rāga-s”.

The general perception is that Rakti rāga-s cannot be defined by ārōhaṇa and avarōhaṇa of a scale. They are rāga-s that are defined or identified by Sancāra-s or phrases. Rakti is derived from the Sanskrit root ‘ranj’, meaning pleasure. The most exciting element of Rakti rāga-s is the immediate identification/familiarity through one or a few phrases or even notes and the subsequent pleasure that follows.

For example,

- |             |   |                 |
|-------------|---|-----------------|
| S(n)P(dpp.) | – | Kalyāṇī         |
| S(ds)P      | – | Śaṅkarābharaṇam |
| Ss pp       | – | Husēnī          |
| S, S,,N     | – | Nīlāmbarī       |
| MGS         | – | Nāṭṭakurinji    |

The very first phrase of the varṇam endeavours to capture the flavour of the rāga and immediately establish its identity.

For example,

Sāvēri (srGrgR), Nāṭṭakurinji (MGS), Rītigauḷa (PMGRS,,), Bēgaḍa (dpMgrs), etc.

Another interesting point to note here is that varṇam-s subtly point towards the jīva or the gr̥ha svāra-s of the rāga. Not only does the pallavi start in the jīva svāra but sometimes also the muktāyi swaram or even the carāṇam.

For example,

the Mōhana (Gāndhāra), Darbār (Pañcama), Kānaḍa (ṛṣabha) and Nāṭṭakurinji (Madhyama) varṇam-s.

Varṇam-s not only include viśēṣa prayōga-s but they also indicate the proportion and context in which they are to be used in manōdharma. For example, the viśēṣa prayōga-s “pdnmpmgrs” in the Śrī rāga varṇam and “sDNSRm” in the Darbār varṇam appear only once — which actually is a subtle hint at how to use them judiciously and in context.

Varṇam-s play a dual role — a strict parental one when it comes to the do-s and dont-s; but also being a cool fun aunt, nudging one to be explorative and test new waters. The offbeat ettugaḍa pallavi-s of varṇam-s are standing examples of this.

For example,

The Ānandabhairavī Ādi tāḷa varṇam by Ponniah Pillai (S, snn, PM)

The Bilahari Ādi tāḷa varṇam by Veenai Kuppayyer (N3,,, sndnP)

## Dāṭṭu Prayōga-s

The Kalyāṇī Aṭa tāḷa varṇam by Pallavi Gopala Iyer is a revelation on the non-linear approach to a seemingly scalar / sampūrṇa rāga like Kalyāṇī where it seems to be perfectly appropriate to approach the rāga in a linear fashion. On the contrary, this varṇam is adamantly non-linear in its approach. The tasteful Dāṭṭu prayōga-s and the pañcama / ṣaḍja varjya prayōga-s are what stand out to me.

For example,

D,ndmg dmgr, **mgrnd**,

Gr mg **nd**

Dgr **pmmg nd** dgrnd dndmg dmgrs

Dnr ndm dmgr nr ns **dnrs**

Most of the nyāsa svara-s in the Kalyāṇī Aṭa tāla varṇam are in ṛṣabha with very meagre phrases that involve the niṣāda and gāndhāra as the main note are in sharp contrast to the Ādi tāla varṇam where the ettugaḍa pallavi starts in kākali niṣāda and involves many phrases involving gāndhāra as an important note.

In the Kāmbhōji Ādi tāla varṇam, the unique, currently (almost) endangered approaches to the pañcama is what stands out.

1. Smgmp
2. Rmgm,P
3. Srs mgm P

Interestingly, the phrase “gpds” which is a patent of rāga-s like Mōhanam or Bilahari features in both the Kāmbhōji Ādi and Aṭa tāla varṇam-s. This goes to show how important context is in singing a phrase.

### Varṇam-s with specific intent

The ettugaḍa svara-s of the Tōḍi Ādi tāla varṇam is fully devoid of pañcama. It makes you wonder if it was composed to prove a point or go even as far as speculating whether it was composed originally in Śuddha Tōḍi.

The 5th ettugaḍa svara-s of the Bilahari Ādi tāla varṇam is heavily nōṭṭu-svara influenced. This once again makes you speculate if the composer’s origins from north Madras, specifically Manali, which was buzzing with English band music during his time, was the inspiration for such a plain notes-forward ciṭṭasvara.

The Khamās pada/cauka varṇam in Tiśra Ēka tāla is totally devoid of kākali niṣāda and yet manages to make every phrase sound quintessentially Khamās with no infiltration of Harikāmbhōji. It is interesting to note that there is no nyāsa in ṛṣabha which is typical to Harikāmbhōji.

Tāna varṇam-s are embedded in a pulsating madhyama kāla tempo whereas pada/cauka varṇam-s are slower in tempo and put the gamaka-s under a magnifying glass. They guide one to approach a raga in a leisurely manner which you could parlay into mastering the art of singing a 4 kaḷai Rāgam Tānam Pallavi or padam-s.

Largely, varṇam-s are classified as Tāna varṇam (moves in a regular pulse set in an even tempo called madhyama kāla), Varṇam (contains sāhitya for all sections), Cauka varṇam (set in a slow tempo), Daru varṇam (set in a medium pace containing a profusion of jāṭis and sāhitya). Svarajātī-s and Daru varṇam-s are closely allied structures.

As mentioned earlier, the varṇam has a kalpita or rigid structure. Each section of the varṇam focuses on different things.

## Structure of a Varṇam

The pallavi and anupallavi usually cover the mandara, madhyama sthāyī sancāra-s. Tāra sthāyī possibilities are explored in the anupallavi. Mukṭāyī svara is like a summary of the pallavi and the anupallavi summarizes and usually ends in an impactful gōpucca yati or a vādi samvādi prayōga.

Mukṭāyī Svara of Kedāragauḷa varṇam of Tiruvottiyur Tyagayya

śndp ndpd Pmg R pm | P, n dp mp nśrś' R R ||  
mṅr' ḡ śr' nś nḡrś' ndp r | R, ś ndP ,mgr ,mpn ||

The Ettugaḍa pallavi or the sāhitya line of the carāṇam is like a catch phrase around which the ettugaḍa svara-s revolve. The first ettugaḍa svara highlights the gamaka-s and puts them under the microscope. We get an insight as to how the svara-s interact with each other and how the gamaka-s pan out when sung in kīṣh kālam.

The second ettugaḍa svara is almost always set in one āvartana, wherein two or more chāya or jīva svara-s of the rāga are highlighted as kārvaī-s and the svara patterns are drawn around them.

For example, in the Śrī rāga varṇam, the niṣāda is the chāya svara or in the Saurāṣṭram varṇam where the dhaivata is the chāya svara.

Śrī rāga varṇam:

N, P M R G R S N , P M P N S R N , S R G R R S N , S R M R G R  
N , S R P M R S N , S R M P N P N , S R N S N P N , P M R M P N

Saurāṣṭram varṇam:

D , P M G R S N D , N S R R S N  
D , N S M G P M D , N S R R S N  
D , P M G R S N D , N S , M G M

This pattern of svara-s is extremely inspiring in creating tasteful solkaṭṭu-s (motifs) while exploring svara singing. Another interesting case is in the second ettugaḍa of the Rītigauḷa varṇam. It is like a saṁjā-jawāb or a twin svara of sorts. At first glance, it is difficult to spot this genius twinning solkaṭṭu formation.

N P N N S – N S G G M  
 S M , M G R – S G , G R S  
 G G M G , M – N N S N , S  
 P M , P G R – G M , N D M  
 N , N D M – M, G R S  
 S, N – P , P  
 N- N

The third ettugaḍa svara-s are usually kārvaī-less. While such svara-s are easily achievable in rāga-s like Mōhanam or Hindōḷam, it is a herculean task in rāga-s like Āhiri or Yadukulakāmbhōji which are predominantly jāru and dīrgha gamakam-based. Varṇam-s show that kārvaī-less svara-s are possible in such rāga-s also which helps in approaching the rāga from a different, less-explored angle.

Āhiri 3rd ettugaḍa svara:

P D M P M – G M P G M G R S – R N S N D P D  
 N – S R S N S M G G R- S D P P M G M P D P  
 D N S R S M G R S R N S N D P – P M G R S  
 G M P D

Yadukulakāmbhōji 3rd ettugaḍa svara:

P D P – P M G – R P M – M G R-  
 M G G R S – G R R S R- M G S R- P M G M P D  
 S R M P D – P M P D S – D S R  
 S G R R S – D S N N D P- M G R G S R M P

The 4th and 5th ettugaḍa svara-s are the most complex and the idea is to give a summing up of the rāga form similar to a grand finale. These passages usually end with sweeping mathematical sequences.

Varṇam-s are a great tool in approaching rare rāga-s, or what we perceive as rare rāga-s like Ghaṇṭā, Nārāyaṇagauḷa, Śuddha Velavali, Kalāvati, Balahamsa, etc. Let us take the Ghaṇṭā varṇam and discuss the caraṇam. Varṇam-s also preserve and hence remind us of phrases that existed – that have been modified over time and hence become extinct in the process. For example, in the Bēgaḍa varṇam, the original “sndns” phrase has been modified as “sndrs”.

But the “sndns” phrase also exists in Tyāgarājāya namastē (“yogīśvara mānasa”) as well as in Yārūkāhilum bhayama (“disaiyil avaravar”). On the other hand, close observation of varṇam-s also helps us understand phrases that did not exist during earlier times. In the Nāyakī varṇam, there are very few occurrences of the phrase ‘rG,R,S’ over ‘rggrs’. Similarly, the occurrence of “rgM,R,S” in the Sāraṅga varṇam is also nil. This leads to the speculation that these phrases could have developed over the years due to the penchant that the human mind has for drawing symmetrical parallels like “dN, dp” “rG,Rs in Nāyakī and “dnSDp” “rgM Rs” etc.

### History of evolution of Rāga-s recorded through Varṇam-s

TIME PERIOD	COMPOSER	VARṆAM	TAḤAM
1680-1710	Govindasamayya	Nisari manne	Ādi
1700-1800	Rudrapatnam Venkataram	Viribōni	Jhampa
1845-1917	Tiruvottiyur Tyagayya	Sami daya	Ādi
1862-1938	Kotisvara Iyer	Sāmi nīye	Ādi
1876-1950	Tiger Varadachari	Nīye	Ādi
1888-1945	Ponnayya Pillai	Sāmi na pai	Aṭa
1907-1988	Thanjavur Sankara Iyer	Kōla mayil	Ādi

Circling back to the mention of varṇam-s being recordkeepers of rāga-s and their evolution over time, the Kēdāragauḷa varṇam-s are a shining example. The earliest known architect of the structure of a varṇam as we know today is Govindasamayya (1680). In his varṇam, “Nī sari manne”, there is a ettugaḍa swara where the svāra-s are mostly within the n-s-r-g framework.

R G R , – S N S R G – S , R – N S , N – R , N S R G R , – S N S R S , R N  
 S R G – S S R G R , – S , S , – R G S – R G S , R M G R- S G R G N R S R  
 N S R G – S R M G , – R M P

The progression of Kēdāragauḷa rāga can be observed by examining its varṇam-s composed over time. For instance, the earliest known composer, Govindasamayya in 1680, presented a basic structure in the varṇam of Kēdāragauḷa. The carāṇam section was still in its early stages, yet to reach the peak of Kēdāragauḷa’s development. There was an “ettugaḍa svāra” where the svāra-s mostly followed the pattern of s-r-g. It is intriguing to consider whether the composer was making a deliberate point or if Kēdāragauḷa was actually sung in that manner during that period.

Subsequently, other composers brought their own variations to Kēdāragauḷa through their varṇam-s. Rudrapatnam Venkatram introduced a significant number of “pdnd” prayoga-s in his varṇam, while Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavatar’s rendition exhibited similarities to Balahamsa with abundant “mrmp” phrases. T.N. Natarajan Pillai presented a refreshing take with an unusual “pnr” prayōga in his varṇam. In Kotisvara Iyer’s varṇam, one section of the ettugaḍa svara solely consisted of gōpucca yati-s. Thus, exploring the different interpretations of Kēdāragauḷa by different composers reveals a diverse and captivating experience, preventing any sense of redundancy or boredom.

In conclusion, there is an abundance of creative ideas to explore through varṇam-s. These compositions offer a pathway to developing a deep appreciation for different rāga-s, especially the cryptic, daunting category that is Rakti rāga-s. A plethora of varṇam-s composed by contemporary and 20th century composers such as Papanasam Sivan, Mangalampalli Balamuralikrishna, T.R. Subramanian, and Lalgudi G. Jayaraman have also been recorded.

Speaking of Lalgudi G. Jayaraman, his Navarasa varṇam “Angayarakāṇṇi ānandam kondāḷe” stands out, particularly the use of the rāga Sāraṅga for the Hāsyā rasa, which perfectly complements the lyrics “kai koṭṭi sirittāl, vāi potthi nagaittāl”. Additionally, his choice of Sucaritra for the Bībhatsa rasa effectively captures the intended emotion and narrative.

Moreover, my own guru, Saṅgīta Kalānidhi Neyveli R. Santhanagopalan has composed beautiful varṇam-s in raga-s such as Aṭhāna, Vasanta Bhairavī, Kōkilavarālī, which hold a special place in my heart.

In my quest to comprehend the distinctiveness of ekaika rāga Kalānidhi (having a sole renowned composition “Chinna nāḍena”), in which I endeavoured to present a Rāgam Tānam Pallavi during my concert for the Music Academy in December 2022, I took on the challenge of composing a varṇam in this rāga. Traditionally, varṇam-s are composed by maestros well-versed in the intricacies of the rāga. However, I took a reverse approach by attempting to grasp the essence of the rāga by attempting to compose a varṇam in this rāga.

It is evident that many composers have skillfully conveyed their stories through varṇam-s, and the exploration of rakti rāga-s through different lenses inspires refreshing ideas, especially for performers and students of music. There is absolutely no dearth for ideas or possibility of stagnation when one regularly peruses and revisits these varṇam-s.

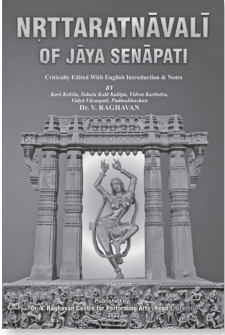
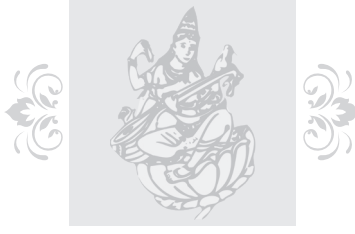


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**Vasanthalakshmi Narasimhachari**

*Bharatanāṭyam and Kuchipuḍi exponent, Ācārya and Nritya Kalānidhi designate*

Nṛtta Ratnāvalī, dated 1253 AD, is an exemplary work by Jaya Senapati (Jāya Senāpati) that mirrors the Dēśi or regional dance traditions prevalent in Andhra during the reign of the Kākatiya dynasty. After Matanga's Brhaddēśi, a magnum opus on the Dēśi forms of music and dance, it is perhaps Jāya or Jāyana who elevated them to the level of Mārga (the well-defined), dealing with them systematically and scientifically.

This book is a critically edited second edition with English Introduction and Notes by Dr. V. Raghavan (henceforth referred to as VR) and published by the Dr. V. Raghavan Centre for Performing Arts (Regd.), Chennai. VR meticulously compiled the original text from two palm-leaf manuscripts in Thanjavur and a fragment from the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Kolkata.

This edition adds a copious amount of VR's later insights. It offers a research-friendly supplement, including a concordance of related passages from Bharata (Nāṭya Śāstra), Sarangadeva (Saṅgīta Ratnākara), Somesvara (Mānasollāsa), Abhinavagupta (Abhinavabhāratī), and others. It features detailed footnotes, explanations of the theory, and performative aspects of Jaya's time. VR quotes passages from the Paṇḍitarādhyā Caritra of Palkuriki Somanatha, noteworthy among them being the performances during the Mahā Śivarātri celebrations in the Srisailem temple.

The author's daughter, Nandini Ramani, an exponent of Bharatanāṭyam, provides the preface to the second revised edition. She observes how, together with the illuminating notes by V. Raghavan, collected over several decades, this edition of Nṛtta Ratnāvali can be of immense use to scholars, students, teachers, and performers of Nāṭyam.

Rallapalli Anantakrishna Sarma, and Dr. Pappu Venugopala Rao, the well-known scholars who have translated the Nṛtta Ratnāvalī into Telugu and English, respectively, have expressed their gratitude to the parent material provided by VR through his meticulous sourcing, compiling, and editing.

The Andhra kingdom, ruled by the Kākattīyā-s from 1163 to 1323 AD, witnessed a flourishing period for arts. The rulers, known for their prowess in warfare, were also enthusiastic patrons of fine arts, literature, and sculpture. This stable governance played a pivotal role in refining the Dēśi forms of art. Among the notable kings of the Kākattīya dynasty, Ganapati Deva's reign, spanning six decades from 1198 to 1261, stands out. Jaya paid homage to his patron king, Ganapati Deva, by dedicating the Nṛtta Ratnāvali to him, immortalizing his admiration for his 'father figure' and the Dēśi nṛtta forms of their era.

The historical accounts of King Ganapati Deva and Jaya reveal a remarkable bond. Ganapati Deva's consolidation of power in Andhra involved defeating local chieftains, including Jaya's father, Pinna Coda Nayaka, and capturing Divi Island. In recognition of the captive king's valour, Ganapati Deva married his daughters, Narama and Perama. Recognizing the humility and bravery of Jaya, he took young Jaya (Śiśu) under his wing. He entrusted him to Gundamatya for fine arts training, akin to the story of Indra entrusting his son Jayanta to Brihaspati.

VR argues that this couldn't have been the celebrated Gundamatya in Prataparudra's court (1296 – 1323 AD) since Jaya lived in an earlier period.

In the opening verses of the fifth chapter, before delving into the realm of Dēśi Nṛtta, Jaya showers King Ganapati Deva with effusive praise. He celebrates the king's exceptional qualities, strength, beauty, and compassion, elevating him as a master of the 'Tauryatritīya' — the triple arts of Nṛtta, Gīta, and Vādyā. Jaya further lauds the king's profound understanding of both the Mārga and Dēśi traditions of Nṛtta. This richly portrays the image of royalty who wielded power, supported culture, and possessed a deep knowledge and appreciation of the fine arts.

Jaya explains that Mārga is rooted in the Nāṭyaveda, a sacred knowledge system elucidated by the ancient ṛṣi-s and embraced by discerning aficionados. On the other hand, Dēśi is tailored to align with the personal preferences of the kings and crafted to satiate their

appetite for novelty. Consequently, the diverse regional styles are fondly referred to as ‘Dēśi’, catering to the unique tastes and sensibilities of the inhabitants of those respective regions.

Eulogizing Nṛtta, he reiterates that Nṛtta complements Nāṭya and Abhinaya, filling their gaps and creating a cohesive whole.

nāṭyēhyabhinayēchidraprasādanaphalam hi tat |  
नाट्येह्यभनियेच्छिद्रप्रसादनफलंहतित् ।

Jaya also notes that there are three points to be considered while dealing with the evolution of Dēśi Nṛtta; past Nṛtta becomes śāstra, and qualifies as Mārga, the future Nṛtta is unknown. Therefore, he focuses on explaining the contemporary Dēśi styles of his time.

Nṛtta Ratnāvali, consisting of eight chapters, can be conveniently divided into two distinct parts. The initial four chapters are dedicated to the Mārga, following the principles outlined in Bharata’s tradition, while the subsequent four chapters delve into the realm of Dēśi forms. Even within the first four chapters, focusing on the Mārga tradition, Jayana’s profound knowledge and erudition are evident. However, it is in the fifth chapter that the elucidation of the Dēśi tradition begins, and it is here that one can truly discern the unmistakable stamp of Jayana’s authority and scholarship.

The second part, namely, chapters five to eight may further be classified into two categories: the first consists of technical aspects such as Deśi Sthānaka, Karaṇa, Bhramarī, Lāsyaṅga-s, which follow and supplement the Mārga bheda-s, and the second division describing a unique variety of dances known as Perani, Rāsaka, Carari, Bahurūpa, Bhāṇḍika, Kollāṭa, and so on.

The earlier Kākaṭṭyā-s followed Jainism, but the subsequent rulers embraced Śaivism, particularly the Pāśupata Sampradāya of the Vīra Śaiva cult.

Jaya provides a vivid account of the dynamic dance form known as Prerani, which eventually evolved into the vernacular terms Perani or Periṇi. The practitioners of Periṇi dance were held to exacting standards, requiring them to hail from respectable lineages, possess expertise in music and dance, and master both the Tāṇḍava and Lāsya styles. They were also expected to perform Gīta Prabandha-s proficiently, showcasing their scholarly depth.

The Periṇi dancers captivated their audiences through a blend of skill, erudition, and the remarkable execution of Utpluti Karaṇa-s, which involved impressive jumps and leaps. Their attire was resplendent, featuring ornaments crafted from seashells or gem-

encrusted gold. Their bodies were adorned with sacred ash (vibhūti), and they sported clean-shaven heads save for a distinctive tuft (śikha). On the one hand, they carried either a simulated snake or a staff (ranga yaṣṭi), while the other held a cāmara or a fly whisk. Their shanks were embellished with tiny bells, adding a musical element to their performance.

Even their entrances onto the stage were dramatic and captivating. Following the lead of similarly attired dancers who preceded them, the Perāṇi dancer would emerge dramatically from behind the curtain (tera), leaving the audience in awe of their artistry.

Jaya explains the five aṅga-s or the limbs of Perāṇa as – Nṛtta, Kaivāra, Gharghara, Vikāṭa, and Gīta. Interestingly, while playing on the Gharghara or the percussion, the Perāṇi is expected to execute seven varieties of footwork.

Every chapter of Nṛtta Ratnāvali throbs dynamically, and in the hands of Jaya, the definitions cease to be dry, hard-to-relate theory rules. Some scholars feel that the exquisitely beautiful sculptures of the Ramappa temple in Palampet, Warangal (in the State of Telangana), too, might have contributed to Jaya's zeal and inspiration.

The Ramappa temple, dedicated to Lord Siva, was constructed in 1213 AD by Recherla Rudra Deva, a minister of King Ganapati Deva, as a tribute to his king. It is alternatively known as Rudreśvarālayam but is more commonly referred to as “Rāmappa Guḍi”, in honour of the temple's architect, Ramappa, a unique distinction indeed! This exquisite temple has earned the prestigious UNESCO World Heritage Site designation.

Dr. Nataraja Ramakrishna, a renowned research scholar and guru, reconstructed the dynamic dance style of the Kākatīyā-s. His work drew extensively from the Nṛtta Ratnāvalī and the sculptures found at the Ramappa temple. He named this dance form ‘Periṇi Śiva Tāṇḍavamu’.

Towards the close of the fifth chapter titled *Deśi-Sthānaka-Karaṇa – Bhramari Lakṣaṇa*, Jayana says that the delineation of these Bhramarī-s is to be understood as identical to the ‘Kūṭa Tāna-s,’ which he has described in his ‘Gīta Ratnāvalī.’

ētāsāmapi vijnyēyah prastārah kūṭatānavat |  
sacāsmābhih sphuṭamgītaratnāvalyāmprapañcitah ||

एतासामपिविज्ञेयः प्रस्तारः कूटतानवत्  
सचास्माभिःस्फुटंगीतरत्नावल्यांप्रपञ्चितः ||

It is a pity that this work titled Gīta Ratnāvalī, and the rumoured third work, Vādyā Ratnāvali, also by the same author, are yet to come to light! Perhaps each of these works

was meant to deal with one of the three aspects of the composite term ‘Saṅgīta’, namely, Nṛtta, Gīta, and Vādyā.

The sixth chapter discusses the 16 Pādā-s, or foot movements, prescribed by Matanga to enhance Dēśi Nṛtta. These include sarika, svastika, ullāla, sphurika, purāṭi, veṣṭana, and others.

Jaya picks 28 Pādā-s as “gems” from the ocean of Dēśi Nṛtta, calling them (Yaugikaha) self-explanatory. Examples include Pāda-mani and Pāṭa-mani. Jaya defines ‘Pādā-pāṭa’ as a dancer’s reproduction of the vocalized syllables with her deft footwork while holding her well-poised torso still.

This concept is reflected in the Kathak of today.

Jaya suggests that experts can use these Pāṭa-s to create captivating combinations, adding beauty and variety to Nṛtta. He emphasizes the importance of improvisation and innovation, a concept also supported by Bharata in the Nāṭya Śāstra.

This chapter also introduces the fascinating concept of ‘Manōdharma’, which involves going beyond taught techniques to blend hand gestures (hasta-s) and other limbs of the body charmingly and spontaneously. While Manōdharma, as a concept, is more familiar in concert music, calling for musical elaboration or rendition extempore, its presence in dance performances is less common.

Dancers can find value in relating the Dēśi terminology to the familiar ‘Aḍavu-s’ prevalent currently. This promotes the understanding that down the ages, the basic techniques remain similar despite differences in nomenclature and performance.

Chapter seven, called the ‘Śikṣā Adhyāya’, deals with the various aspects of pedagogy: the process of training, the auspicious days for starting the training, a suitable place for practicing wherein an ideal temperature is maintained to accommodate the seasonal variations, the practice costume, propitiating of the various deities, musical instruments and the like. The young dancer begins her training by holding on to a pole for support and practicing the various movements in the Mārga and Dēśi divisions daily. Once she gains enough confidence, the same movements are done to the prescribed tāla structure. Gradually, she will add to this the practice of vocalizing the syllables “Vaktra Vādyena” and, finally, she is also trained to sing while dancing.

Jaya reveals a crucial detail: when a dancer becomes proficient in music, instruments, and dance, the Ācārya imparts invaluable secrets, elevating her to a superior level. These

teachings, known as ‘*rahasyamupadeśavyam*,’ are a gift from the Ācārya and cannot be acquired through practice alone.

After describing several interesting Dēśi forms specialized in different parts of the country, Jaya focuses on the qualifications of a ‘Nartaki’ or a danseuse.

rūpayauvanayuktānāmsahasrēṣipimrgīdrśām||

kalāguṇasamētānāmnartakīnaivalabhyate |

nartakīgāyanīsyāccētbhōginīpātramanyathā||

रूपयौवनयुक्तानांसहस्रेऽपिमृगीदृशाम्॥

कलागुणसमेतानानर्तकीनैवलभ्यते।

नर्तकीगायनीस्याच्चेत्भोगिनीपात्रमन्यथा ||

“Among a thousand damsels, doe-eyed, talented, young, and beautiful, it is difficult to find even a single ‘nartaki’. And if this nartaki is also an accomplished singer, she becomes a ‘bhōginī’, for without this additional talent, she would remain a pātra.”

Chapter eight paints a vivid picture of the preparation and presentation of the performance commissioned by the royalty. The details include the role and calibre of the audience, the Sabhāpati — the chief guest and the Sabhika-s or the audience seated according to their rank and hierarchy.

The king enters the ‘Naipathyasadana’ or the auditorium majestically while young women holding gold plates with camphor lamps welcome him reverentially. As their diamond-studded bangles light up the vicinity, they dance gracefully, waving the lamps in a circular motion. Their sweet songs sound like the Pañcamagāna of the cuckoo. Here, Jaya uses an Atiśayōkti Alankāra or hyperbole; he says,

śuddhāmgītimivaprēkṣyāmkurvadbhirdantakāntibhihi |

शुद्धांगीतिमिवप्रेक्ष्यांकुर्वद्भिर्दन्तकान्तिभिः।

As they sing, the songs appear free from blemish, as though cleansed by the sparkling whiteness of their teeth!

An interesting fact regarding the gradation of the audience is that of the musicians: Vāggeyakāra, Gāndharva, Svarādi. VR explains that, as the very term explains, Vāg (lyrics) and Géya (music) define a superior musician who is also a lyricist and a composer. Gāndharva is proficient in both the Mārgi and the Dēśi styles of music, and Svarādi is adept only in the Mārga style.

While describing a unique role played by an aesthete, VR laments the loss of two lines in a stanza that alluded to the ‘Tāmbooladāyini’, a trusted figure near the king responsible for presenting the Tāmboola or Pān. Her eyes, adorned with collyrium (anjana), symbolize her privileged proximity to the king. VR suggests that Jaya may have ingeniously drawn a parallel and worked conceit upon the words, ‘proximity’ and ‘anjana.’ Some anjana types are known for enhancing one’s vision, and it appears that this lady has positioned herself close to the king to keenly observe and discreetly inform him about the identities and qualifications of the dancers and singers in the court. The air was charged with anticipation as the courtiers and guests settled into their designated places.

The prima ballerina’s detailed appearance, makeup, and costume, including the inner shorts, ‘arthorukamu’ facilitating movement, is highlighted. Commissioned specially by the king for the celebrations, an orchestra of lady musicians is assembled. Saradatanaya (Bhāvaprakāśa) calls this the “Abhyantara Brinda,” while an ensemble of male and female musicians and dancers is termed “Bāhya Brinda.”

Jaya’s overarching expertise is evident from his knowledge of the various musical instruments and his skill in stage design, right down to the smallest details, like the special gem-studded square structure on the stage, which enhances the radiance of the dancer. His mastery extends to numerous other aspects of this splendid performance.

The danseuse waits behind three curtains, ‘Pratiśtra’ held by young girls, appearing like the goddess Mahalakshmi rising from the ‘Kshīra Sāgara,’ eager to garland her beloved Lord! Two curtains are removed to the accompaniment of instrumental music before the Puṣpāñjalī, and the third opens as the orchestration reaches a crescendo.

At this exhilarating point, the text of Nṛtta Ratnāvalī abruptly ends! It jumps to the part where the king and the nobles, pleased by the dancer’s extraordinary performance, shower her with gold, silk, and fragrances. The king tells her, “You are exhausted; retire to your chambers and rest.”

“śrāntā... gatvāveśmaviśrāmyatāmtvayā”

The author concludes his work, the Nṛtta Ratnāvalī, with a striking metaphor that captures the meticulous craftsmanship and beauty of Jayasenapati’s creation.

sūcīmukhagatisyūtaguṇāśikharaśobhinī |  
jāyasēnādhināthēnanṛttaratnāvalīkṛtā ||

सूचीमुखगतिस्यूतगुणाशिखरशोभिनी।  
जायसेनाधिनाथेननृत्तरत्नावलीकृता।



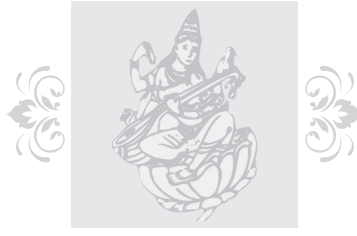
Jāyāsenādhinātha's dazzling nṛttaratnāvalī, or the garland of nṛtta, has been composed with the Nṛttāṅga-s — sūcīmukha, gati, guṇa, and śikhara.

Here, one could infer that 'Nṛttaratnāvalī' — 'the garland of gems', deftly strung with needle and thread, has adorned the 'śikhara' or the hair-knot of the Nartaki, enhancing her beauty.

In commendation of his own work (Grantha Praśasthi), Jaya envisions a scenario in which sage Bharata descends from Brahma Lōka in the forthcoming Kṛta Yuga and goes through his work, Nṛtta Ratnāvalī. He says, "Exhilarated by my work, Brahma will exclaim to the sages: "O behold this wonder! How did Jayāsenapati comprehend the quintessence of my work with such precision?" This suggests the profound impact and appreciation that Jayāsenapati's creation could have in the future.

It is perhaps not an overstatement to hint at the idea that in the next Kali Yuga, Jaya might similarly admire Dr. V. Raghavan's efforts in exploring the nuances of the Nṛtta Ratnāvalī. This book, a valuable collection, serves as a rich source of information for a wide range of artistes, scholars, and art enthusiasts. It is reasonably priced at 900 rupees and comprises 672 pages, available at the Dr. V. Raghavan Centre for Performing Arts (Regd.) in Chennai.





## **1. The Rāga of My Life (2002)**

**60 pages. Rs. 1000**

## **2. The Glorious Tradition of the Etawah-Imdad Khan Gharāna (2007)**

**73 pages + CD of recordings. Rs. 1000.00**

**Author: Arvind Parikh**

*Publisher: International Foundation for Arts.*

Oricon House, 12, K. Dubash Marg, Mumbai 400 023.

*Review by*

**Deepak S. Raja**

*Hindustani musician, scholar, writer and author of books on music*

The abolition of princely states after independence totally destabilized the Hindustani (Hindustānī) music eco-system. Classical music shifted its base from feudal-agrarian India to urban-industrial India. The transition also heralded the decline of hereditary musicianship, and the entry of talented youngsters from urban middle-class families. Simultaneously, the musical assets accumulated during the feudal-agrarian era were being steadily depleted because of a growing shortage of committed guru-s. Widespread access to musical knowledge, pre-recorded music, and the broadcast media enlarged audiences, but diluted their discernment profiles. With so major a transformation, the traditional quality-control mechanisms of Hindustani music faced the risk of collapse.

Government policies, though broadly pro-culture, struggled to understand and organize the cultural process, but achieved only the kind of results bureaucracies can achieve. New cultural institutions emerged to bring some sense of coherence to the emerging eco-system, but needed enlightened guidance.

At this juncture in India's cultural life, the author, Arvind Parikh, entered the music world to excel as a musician, as a missionary for the legacy of the sitār maestro Vilayat Khan, as a trainer of aspiring sitārists, and as a crusader for the cultivation of public taste. He helped build cultural institutions, and advocated the cause of classical music in the portals of power. His contribution to the music world stands alongside his emergence as a leader of India's vibrant logistics business.

## **The Rāga of My Life**

This memoir was published on the occasion Arvind Parikh's 75th birthday (2002). The book is tastefully conceived and presented with readable typography. The contents were recorded during a series of monologues in the presence of his senior students, and the transcriptions edited to satisfy the demands of the print medium. Having originated in the spoken word, the narration is frequently conversational, and consistently readable. The organization of the narrative probably reflects the sequence in which it was recorded, rather than strict chronology. However, the book's seven chapters, captioned thoughtfully, protect the reader against dissonance.

The narration begins with Parikh's childhood in a music-loving family of textile industry businessmen from Ahmedabad. His musical story begins around the age of 10, when he discovered the wealth of classical music available on the radio, and was encouraged to try his hand at several instruments before he decided to become a sitārist. When he heard Vilayat Khan, the search for a guru was over.

Vilayat Khan was, then, a resident of Bombay. Parikh's tutelage with the Ustād was arranged around the time he was finishing high school. Parikh took admission to a college in Bombay, and also began developing the small cargo agency, which his father had bought in the city. A few years later, he married Kishori Zaveri, a talented Hindustani vocalist. A promising business, a formidable guru, and a supportive family became the springboard for the launch of Arvind Parikh into the business and cultural firmament.

A substantial part of the book deals with the friend-cum-disciple-cum-manager relationship which began with a 17-year old Arvind Parikh becoming a disciple of a 20-year old Vilayat Khan, and ended only with Vilayat Khan's demise at the age of 78. The narration reveals some charming, but relatively unknown, facets of Vilayat Khan's personality and accomplishments which made him an enigmatic blend of the tradition and modernity.

Parikh launched his performing career at the age of 20 as a broadcaster on All India Radio, and steadily acquired national stature with performances at the major music festivals in India and also at relatively minor venues. In his mid-30s, he started performing abroad.

This was a period of growing interest in Hindustani music amongst academic as well as trans-culturally sensitive music lovers in the US and Europe. In addition to touring as a solo artist, Parikh sporadically offered a bouquet of performances, featuring himself, wife Kishori, the sārāṅgi exponent Sultan Khan and the tabla maestro, Mohammad Ahmed Khan. These sojourns, backed by his urbane personality and articulation, forged for him a vast network of relationships which helped him emerge, in later years, as an important cultural ambassador of India.

The narrative is a little unclear about when Parikh started teaching — the activity which has progressively dominated his stature as a musician. His role as a guru began casually and informally while he was still in his 20s. His following grew speedily when he was in his 40s, when he gained recognition as a performing artist. By then, he had integrated his teaching commitments into his routine, and developed an original approach to grooming aspirants. Interestingly, he has never accepted any remuneration or favour of any kind from his students. The narration claims a roster of over 40 students (in 2002) spread worldwide, and names several of them, who have achieved respectable abilities as performers, teachers or scholars.

Arvind Parikh's initiation into leadership within the community of musicians makes interesting reading. In the period immediately after independence, Hindustani music was populated by a galaxy of formidable musicians who had risen to prominence during the pre-independence era. In the 1950s, AIR initiated a system for auditioning musicians for empanelment, which the maestros of the time resented. To resist the bureaucratic affront to their self-esteem, they formed a union called “Kalākār Maṇḍal”, with Parikh as their Secretary and spokesperson. The Maṇḍal held protests against AIR and even went on strike, refusing to broadcast over its stations. The matter went up to the State Chief Minister, and even the Court for resolution.

The narration is vague about the outcome of the conflict. However, Parikh's activism did give him intimate personal access to the leading musicians of the era. Glimpses of this access can be gleaned from the fifth and sixth chapters. The chapters feature charming vignettes of the author's search of musical wisdom through interactions with several of his distinguished contemporaries — Ameer Khan, Mohammad Ahmed Khan, Ameer Hussain Khan, Niyaz Ahmed and Faiyaz Ahmed Khan, Ahmedjan Thirakwa, Begum Akhtar, Latafat Hussain Khan, Bade Gulam Ali Khan, Radhika Mohan Maitra, and D.T. Joshi.

The penultimate chapter titled “Management in the cultural environment” recounts his rising stature as an entrepreneur with a global presence, and his willingness to commit his managerial skills to the challenges facing the music world. The chapter describes his

contribution to the activities of the ITC-Sangeet Research Academy, The National Centre for the Performing Arts, The Indian National Music Committee, the International Music Council of the UNESCO, and The Music Forum of Bombay.

In the last chapter, the author describes his memoir as an expression of gratitude to his parents, his immediate family, and everyone who helped him lead a full and rewarding life. What the author leaves unspecified is the audiences he is addressing. We may attempt to infer this from the contents and the context.

Arvind Parikh is a respected name in two totally unconnected worlds — Hindustani music and logistics. His music constituency may be largely unaware of his distinction as an entrepreneur, even though it has benefited from his commitment of his time and resources to it. Likewise, the corporate world could be largely unaware of his achievements as a musician. His memoir can therefore be of interest to members of both communities, especially because it implicitly asks them some uncomfortable questions.

Professional musicians will ask themselves whether they are treating their teaching obligations as anything more than a source of revenue — as a sacred duty towards the artistic tradition which has given them a respectable place in society. Contemporary students of classical music will ask themselves whether they have the seriousness of purpose to be accepted by a guru of Vilayat Khan's calibre, and the tenacity to do justice to the relationship. Business leaders will ask themselves how consciously they have supported the Indian classical arts, and compensated them, even if only partially, for the loss of aristocratic patronage practiced during the feudal-agrarian era.

## **The Glorious Tradition of the Etāwāh-Imdādkhāni Gharāna**

The volume attempts to place, in historical context, the emergence of Vilayat Khan (1927-2004) as a revolutionary *ṣitār*ist in the latter half of the 20th century. The objective is to aid the appreciation of the Vilayat Khan phenomenon as a maturation of the stylistic directions chosen by his ancestors — starting with his grandfather, Imdad Khan of Etawah (1848-1920). The author is equipped to undertake this task by virtue of being the senior-most student of Vilayat Khan, and by having been a teacher of the maestro's distinctive idiom for several decades.

Like the author's memoir reviewed above, this volume is also thoughtfully designed and handsomely produced. The organization of the material and the layout appear to suggest its origins in a slide presentation (lecture demonstration) that the author may have made at gatherings of aficionados. The book ends with a glossary of non-English terms, to aid the comprehension of technical features by a diverse population of readers. By special

arrangement with recording companies, the author has thoughtfully appended to the volume a CD containing 25 tracks of sitār and surbahār music in order to help readers appreciate the evolution. The CD includes a surbahār recording of Imdad Khan, made in 1902/1904.

In the first chapter, the author deals with the various theories surrounding the origins of the sitār, and traces its physical and stylistic evolution since its emergence in the early 18th century. In the second chapter, the author deals with the concept of a “Gharāna” (stylistic lineage) as prevalent in Hindustani music, and outlines the dimensions of specialization which members of each lineage may pursue to deliver a distinctive musical experience. With respect to gharānā-s of sitār music, the author lists seven known lineages, of which some are either extinct, or no longer represented by significant exponents.

In the third chapter, the author describes the genealogy of the Etawah-Imdadkhani gharānā, starting with Thakur Srujan Singh, Jagirdar (Landlord) of Naogaon (early 18th century), a reputed dhrupad vocalist. His son Ustad Turab Khan, was reportedly also a dhrupad vocalist. In the third generation, Ustad Sahebdad Khan (early 19th century), a prominent sitār and surbahār player (by some accounts, also a sārāṅgi exponent), is credited with launching the instrumental music tradition of the family. In the fourth generation, Ustad Imdad Khan (1848-1920) emerged as a formidable surbahār and sitār player, who recorded the first 78 rpm gramophone disc (1902) on the surbahār. The luxuriant flowering of the sitār-surbahār tradition of the family is credited to Ustad Enayet Khan (1894-1938) in the fifth generation, which makes Vilayat Khan the sixth generation of this lineage.

The fourth chapter details the contribution of Vilayat Khan’s grandfather, Imdad Khan and father Enayet Khan in the late 19th-early 20th centuries. Imdad Khan commenced the drift of the sitār idiom away from the dhrupad-inspired (Rudra Vīṇa) idiom of the plucked instruments towards post-dhrupad music. After him, Enayet Khan drove sitār music closer to the idioms of the modern vocal genres (khayāl and ṭhumrī), achieving an appealing refinement of content, as well as communication of emotional values. His musical achievements made him the most sought-after guru for aspiring sitārists. The author presents an impressive roster of the Enayet Khan’s direct as well as third generation disciples.

The last part of the fourth chapter, which occupies almost half of the book, details the musical journey of Vilayat Khan, whose impact has sustained, and even enlarged, the influence of Etawah-Imdad Khan lineage over sitār music well into the 21st century.

The narration traces the evolution of Vilayat Khan’s distinctive vocalized idiom (gāyaki aṅga) to the early loss of his father at the age of 11 (according to some accounts, 15). He was groomed largely under the tutelage of his maternal uncle and maternal grandfather, both of whom were vocalists. Even though he pursued the sitār as a familial legacy, Vilayat Khan’s

ideation processes were those of a vocalist. This background largely explains the evolution of his musical journey as a progressive exploration of the sitār's musical capabilities, culminating finally in its most comprehensive exploitation yet heard. The process involved re-engineering and re-tuning the sitār, and developing appropriate techniques for sound activation and melodic execution for each movement of the rāga-presentation protocol.

The chapter includes brief notes on other facets of Vilayat Khan's musical life — an accomplished vocalist who never performed as one; a master of the semi-classical genres, who would occasionally tutor Begum Akhtar; a trained surbahār player who performed very rarely on it; the performer of memorable duets in partnership with Ali Akbar Khan, Imrat Khan, and Bismillah Khan; a brilliant composer of film scores, commissioned by film-makers like Satyajit Ray and James Ivory-Ismael Merchant.

The chapter ends with listing the distinguished instrumentalists in the seventh generation of the Etawah lineage who are currently front-ranking sitārists, and give evidence of its aesthetic durability. This list includes Vilayat Khan's own sons, his brother, Imrat Khan's sons, and the grandson of Vilayat Khan's uncle, Waheed Khan.

This volume is aimed clearly at an audience of sitārists, connoisseurs and academics. It is a diplomatically correct exposition of the Etawah-Imdadkhani gharāna's history, without any explicit comparison with any other gharāna. There could, however, be an opaque sub-text to the endeavour. Vilayat Khan's principal rival for the *Numero Uno* position amongst sitārists was Ravi Shankar. There was, and perhaps still is, a substantial polarization of preferences amongst their respective fans. In the past, this polarization is known to have engulfed even influential music critics in the media.

Against this backdrop, but without even the faintest suggestion of a comparison, the author's exposition encourages the music community to take a mature view of the stylistic distinctions between dhrupad-inspired style of Ravi Shankar and the khayāl and ṭhumrī inspired style of Vilayat Khan. Even though the former may be mediaeval and the latter modern, audience preferences can only be a matter of personal taste. They cannot be the basis for regarding the musicianship of either of these giants as superior or inferior to the other.

There is, possibly, a competitive proposition hidden in the gharāna/pedigree/lineage focus of the narration. Vilayat Khan's music represents expertise accumulated over at least three generations of the family who were, exclusively, exponents of the sitār and its companion instrument, the surbahār. In comparison, Ravi Shankar's Maihar gharāna is not, either essentially or exclusively, a sitār-surbahār tradition. This distinction seems inconsequential today. But, in the orthodox and doctrinaire world of Hindustani music, it apparently mattered.

The two volumes reviewed here constitute a small part of the effort Arvind Parikh has made, over the years, to educate different segments of the music community on different aspects of the Hindustani music tradition. They do, however, provide an insight into his perception of the cultural transition taking place in his times, and his willingness to fulfil the responsibilities of his generation towards nurturing the Hindustani music eco-system.







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