

Lalitha Kala Tarangini

Premier Quarterly Music Magazine from
Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira

October 2024



GV Krishna Prasad (1941-2023)

Dr. Rajkumar Bharathi Honoured

Dr. Rajkumar Bharathi was honoured with prestigious title
"Sangeetha Vedantha Dhurina" on 11 February 2024 at
The Bangalore Gayana Samaja
in the divine presence of
"H H Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar"

The title carries a purse of Rs. One Lakh,
a silver medal and a citation. This award is instituted in memory of our visionary founder
Shri. G Vedantha Iyengar who started the institution 69 years ago.



Standing Left to Right - Dr. MR Yogananda, Honorary Secretary, SRLKM, Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar,
Dr. Rajkumar Bharathi, Shri. HR Yathiraj, President, SRLKM



October 2024

It has been over a year since Shri GV Krishna Prasad attained the sacred feet of the Lord, yet we continue to struggle with his absence. His influence and guiding force are felt more profoundly now than when he was with us, impacting every aspect of our sabha's activities. His unwavering dedication and selflessness are irreplaceable, and replicating these qualities will be a significant challenge. Despite this, the Mandira remains committed to pursuing his vision. We believe his blessings will continue to guide us as SRLKM stays a prominent force in serving the world of music.

The Spring Music Festival, Shri Krishna Prasad's brainchild, held in February 2024, was a resounding success. Since his passing, the Mandira has organised more than 30 concerts, averaging two concerts per month. Shri Krishna Prasad supported and nurtured countless young musicians, recognising their potential and providing them with invaluable opportunities - many of whom have gone on to become leading artists today. With the same vigour, the Mandira continues to invite young and upcoming musicians to perform, ensuring that his legacy of nurturing talent endures.

This edition comes after a long gap, but we've included some engaging articles. A highlight is an excellent interview with Dr. Rajkumar Bharathi, who was awarded the prestigious 'Sangeetha Vedantha

Dhurina' by SRLKM on 11 February 2024. His remarkable musical journey is truly inspiring, and I hope our young musicians will find great motivation in it. Additionally, this edition features an article on the revered H.H. Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar, who recently completed 75 years of a deeply meaningful life. RK Padmanabha, a rare gem of Karnataka and a multifaceted musical persona, is also celebrated in this issue, as Ranjani Govind highlights his extraordinary contributions to the world of music over the past 75 years.

I wish all our readers a very happy and joyful Deepavali!

Regards,

Anand S

Contributors: J Suresh, Sachi R Sachidananda, Neyveli Santhanagopalan, Ranjani Govind, Prof R Visweswaran, Dr. Yogananda MR, Rajashree Yogananda, BK Sriram, Shylaja and Venugopal.

Photo Courtesy: Personal collections of Dr. Rajkumar Bharathi, Hitesh Ranjan and Anagha Yoganand of SRLKM, Collection from A Home Called "Parvathi", Personal Collections from RK Padmanabha, Personal collections of Prof. R Visweswaran, The Hindu.

Front Cover - Late GV Krishna Prasad, Ex-Secretary and a driving force of SRLKM

Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira (SRLKM) founded by Shri G Vedanta Iyengar in the year 1955 is rendering yeomen service in the field of music. In addition to music classes, music concerts are held all through the year. The significant festivals are Sankranti and Spring music festivals. Mandira also takes pride in conducting music awareness program, music workshops, Lecture demonstrations etc. Entry to all program conducted by the Mandira is free as the aim of the institution is to enable everyone to listen to the best of the music and to propagate Karnatic Classical Music.

"Lalitha Kala Tarangini" publication is fostered by Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira, disseminates knowledge in the area of Karnatak Classical Music and bring to light talent and excellence in this area. We believe this is just another step towards preserving and promoting this great Indian fine art.

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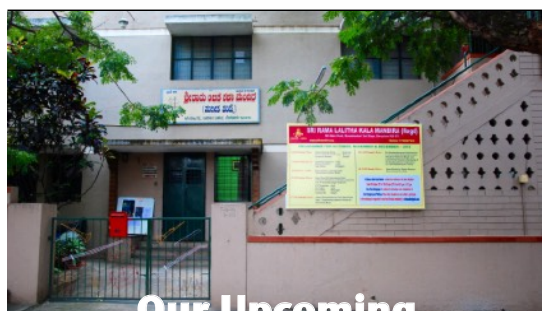
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Old file photo of Sri. GV Krishna Prasad with Sangeetha Kala Acharya Neela Ramgopal (Mr. Ramgopal is in the background)

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Our Upcoming Programmes

03 Nov '24 05.30 pm SRLKM Auditorium	SV Sahana (Veena), KU Jayachandra Rao (Mridanga), SN Narayan Murthy (Ghata)
17 Nov '24 05.30 pm SRLKM Auditorium	Bharat Sundar (Vocal), Nishanth Chandran (Violin), KU Jayachandra Rao (Mridanga), Omkar Rao (Ghata)
01 Dec '24 5.30 pm SRLKM Auditorium	Shruti S Bhat (Vocal), Jyothsna Manjunath (Violin), Phaneendra Bhaskara (Mridanga), Sukanya Ramgopal (Ghata)
01 Jan '25 05.30 pm SRLKM Auditorium	Heramba and Hemantha (Flute duet), Arjun Kumar (Mridanga), Guruprasanna (Khanjira)
04 Jan '25 5.30 pm SRLKM Auditorium	Archit Kumar (Vocal), Ananthapadmanabha (Violin), Abhiram Nitin (Mridanga), BS Raghunandan (Ghata)
18 Jan '25 5.30 pm SRLKM Auditorium	JA Jayanth (Flute), Nishanth Chandran (Violin), NC Bharadwaj (Mridanga), B Rajashekhar (Morsing)



SRLKM mourns the demise of Vid. L. Bhimachari (1931–2024), the eminent Indian Carnatic Morsing player. He and his family of morsing players were long associated with SRLKM. Vid. Bhimachari was honoured with many awards, the most prominent being the T. Chowdiah National Award. His family, known as the "Morsing Family of Karnataka," includes six morsing players and a mridangam artist spanning three generations. The family has brought this traditional Indian instrument to the global stage, with Dhruvaraj, Rajashekar, and Bhagyalakshmi performing at the prestigious Global Jew's Harp Festival in Amsterdam in 2006. Team SRLKM prays for his sadgati and extends heartfelt condolences to his family members and fans.

The Selfless Shri. Krishna Prasad

Prof. R Visweswaran, Mysore

Our field of music is composed of variety of types of people. Musicians - performers and teachers in music, music listeners, music students, organisers of sabhas, all of which intend to promote music. Philanthropists support the sabha by sponsoring music concerts, covering the expenses involved in organising the programs. We have other philanthropists who make donations. There are a few who institute scholarships in universities, institutions of music and other academic institutions with a special value for music as well as to organise music competitions. For many decades, Akashavani and Door-darshan "have been" patrons of music, inviting musicians to broadcast their concerts from their stations. A few other TV Channels like SVBC Channel of the TTD appear to be the only hope for broadcast of classical music by musicians.

The ministry of culture of the state as well as the country used to be the quarters expected to do everything in the direction of promoting music and other arts. I see a clear change in the perspective of Govt. in which promotion of classical music in different ways is getting the last place, if it gets a place at all.

Long before this situation for music, the "Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira" institution dedicated to projecting excellence in music by concerts by talented musicians, young and old from Karnataka as well as from other states was born. We did have many Sangeetha Sabhas like the centenarian "The Gayana Samaja", The Musicians Forum, The Karnataka Ganakala Parishat and many others, particularly in Mysore and Bangalore. However Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira made a difference because of the unique per-

spective of its founder Shri. GV Krishna Prasad. Shri. Krishna Prasad was a rarely noticeable, 'self reliant' organiser of his sabha especially in the matter of payments of honoraria to artistes he invited to perform.

Sangeetha Sabha's raise the funds from donations as also by membership fees from their members. An accepted way of raising funds was by levying entry tickets for the interested rasikas who had to buy the tickets because of being non-members. By contrast, at SRLKM, Shri. GV Krishna Prasad arranged concerts for free for everyone to come and enjoy.

In 2008 Shri. GV Krishna Prasad instituted an annual award for exceptional excellence in music. While the managing committees "Unanimous Opinion" would decide the 'would be the awardee' in other sabhas, if at all they give awards, the Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira awardee was selected only by Shri. GV Krishna Prasad judgement of merit and exceptional excellence of the selected awardee. Selection of each years awardees for these many years for this prestigious award of excellence in music spoke volumes for the absolute objective and totally above board selection of musicians whose excellence was universally accepted and was acceptable.

This was the award in memory of Shri. GV Krishnaprasad's revered father Sri Vedanta Iyengar's memory carrying a purse of one Lakh Rs. and the title "Sangeetha Vedanta Dhureena". The purse money for this award came from Shri. GV Krishna Prasad's personal sponsorship.

Shri. GV Krishna Prasad, who never married, was thus a 'Vairaagi' who did not appear to need or want anything and gave all his personal

funds and savings for music and musicians with exceptional excellence. His simplicity in thought, word, and deed, along with his nobility and unwavering love for music, musicians, music lovers, awardees he honoured, and students, left a lasting impression on all who knew his idealistic nature. His total dedication of mind, heart, and hands is deeply missed by Karnataka Sangeetha.

May Shri. GV Krishna Prasad's ideals and love of music continue to inspire us all.

(We are deeply honoured to have received a handwritten article from the 93-year-old legendary Prof. R. Visweswaran, who graciously expressed his appreciation for the contributions of Shri GV Krishnaprasad. This cherished manuscript, a testament to Prof. R Visweswaran's respect and admiration, will be preserved as a valuable memorabilia for posterity)

R. VISWESWARAN

Fellowship of Sangeet Natak Akademi

Shri R Visweswaran was born on 15 March 1931 in Mysuru, Karnataka. The senior most Veena virtuoso of India, he is recognised as a top grade artist by the nation and its electronic media.

Renowned at home and abroad, he has an individualistic style in veena playing. Shri R. Visweswaran is a purist in Carnatic music known for innovative and explorative creation and expression. His performances reflect raga purity, discreet gamakas, and effortless laya control. A master composer, Shri R. Visweswaran has over a hundred and fifty compositions in Sanskrit, Telugu, and Kannada, adding lustre to Carnatic music with his new ragas. He is a musicologist known for practice-oriented lecture-demonstrations on Carnatic music intricacies. The BBC, London; Cambridge Radio; Dublin Radio; Independent Television of Birmingham; Belfast TV; Doordarshan; Udaya TV; SVBC; and ETV have interviewed and featured his veena concerts. Shri R. Visweswaran has enthralled audiences at international conferences and festivals in India, London, Aberdeen, Dublin, UAE, Singapore, and Malaysia. He served the University of Mysore as Professor and Head of Music, nurturing disciples who excel in music. A household name, Visweswaran's lec-Dems on intricate music topics and commentary on Lakshya Lakshana are widely acclaimed.

Shri R. Visweswaran has been honoured with the Sangeet Natak Akademi Tagore Award, Karnataka Rajya Sangita Vidwan, Chowdaiah Award by the Government of Karnataka, Kannada Rathna by Navika USA, Sangita Choodamani by Krishna Gana Sabha, Chennai, Sangeetha Vedantha Dhurina by Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira and Sangita Vidyayinichi by the Andhra Music Academy.

Shri R. Visweswaran is elected Fellow of Sangeet Natak Akademi for his contribution to Indian music.

Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards 2022-23



Bheeshmacharya of the Music world

Sri.TS Parthasarathy, Author, Music & Dance Scholar and Ex-Secretary of the Music Academy

Courtesy 'Saraswathi Vaggeyakara Trust', Chennai

Original article in Tamil translated to English by J Suresh, Coimbatore



Those who can simultaneously exhibit "sahitya" (capacity to write/compose) and "sangitha" (set music) deserve to be called as "Uttama Vaggeyakara" ...so said a leading music literature. Someone else setting music to someone else's lyrics or someone penning lyrics for someone else's music borne in his mind are generally looked down and considered secondary in our country. In the field of poetry this is derided as "ezuthadaindha pattu" or "music filled with words". The phrase is used to critique

the practice of creating songs where the lyrics might not stand on their own as poetry and are instead considered fillers for the musical composition. However, the collaboration between lyricists and composers - where one person sets music to another's lyrics has been in vogue in our country for long. This has only become more common in the twentieth century.

If we were to measure today's artistes by the yardstick of "Uttama Vaggeyakara", very few will only pass the test. Notable among them will be Mysore Vasudevachar, Muthaiah Bhagavatar and Papanasam Sivan. A few others also may find a place in that list but I am not mentioning them now lest the list becomes long.

Vasudevachar was born in 1865 in the village of Sevvur, located in Coimbatore district. His father, Subramanya Achar, was a scholar proficient in 'purana pravachana'. Over time, the family moved to Mysore, where Subramanya Achar sought and received support from the Maharajah. He intended for his only son, Vasudeva, to follow in his footsteps by becoming proficient in the 'puranas'. To prepare him for this, he arranged for Vasudeva to study North Indian languages.

However, young Vasudeva's true passion lay in music. He began his musical training under Vidwan Subbarayar, Veene Padmanabhaiah, and Veene Seshanna, through whom he gained considerable knowledge. Recognising his talent, Chamaraja Wodeyar, the Maharajah of Mysore at the time, took Vasudeva under his patronage. He arranged for him to study with the renowned Shri Pattanam Subramanya Iyer in Thiruvaiyaru,

providing a letter of introduction for his entry into the *gurukula*.

In his later years, Shri Vasudevachar published a Kannada book in 1955 titled “Naa Kanda Kalaavidaru” (The Artists Whom I Met/Knew), recounting his personal experiences with various artists. In the book, he describes his journey to Thiruvaiyaru and his first meeting with Shri Pattanam Subramanya Iyer in the following way:

It was around 10 AM when I arrived in Thiruvaiyaru. The sun was harsh, and I wondered how I would manage to live in this heat. Nevertheless, I had a refreshing bath in the Cauvery River and then made my way to my future guru's home. With my broken Tamil, I asked for directions at a few houses and eventually arrived at one, knocking on the door. The door opened to reveal an imposing figure, with ‘vibhuti’ smeared across his forehead, resembling none other than Lord Shiva himself. I faintly recalled seeing him somewhere before. With a smiling face, he asked me who I was. Before I could finish saying, “Pattanam Subramanya Iyer's house,” his expression darkened, his eyes glowered, and he abruptly shut the door in my face.

Surprised by this, I continued my search, inquiring at a few more places, and finally found my way to Subramanya Iyer's residence.

He welcomed me with a warm smile and carefully read the introductory letter from the Maharajah of Mysore. He then kindly suggested that I take a bath, have some food, and that we would talk afterward. When I mentioned that I had already completed my bath, he led me inside and made sure I had my meal. It was only several months later that I learned the person who had shut the door in my face was none other than Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer, and that there had been some misunderstanding between him and my guru, Subramanya Iyer.

Subramanya Iyer accepted Vasudevachar as his disciple and began teaching him the *Begada* raga Ata Tala Varnam “*Marachitlundedi*,” composed by Patnam. He was made to practice this piece for many months. Vasudevachar underwent rigorous

training for six years before he became a proficient pallavi vidwan.

Vasudevachar recounts these experiences with humour in his book. In the same work, he also writes about prominent musicians such as Veene Seshanna, Veene Subbanna, Bidaram Krishnappa, Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar, Muguru Subbanna, Sadashiva Rao, Padmanabhayya, Bangalore Nagarathnamma, Tiger Varadachariar, and Muthaiah Bhagavatar, all in his inimitable style.

After returning to Mysore, Vasudevachar became a vidwan par excellence, particularly known for his mastery in raga alapane. He set new trends in singing madhyamakala thana and pallavi in the style of Pattanam Subramanya Iyer. Although today's generation may not have had the chance to hear Vasudevachar's glorious concerts, he spent 60 years performing across Mysore, various parts of South India, and even in places like Baroda, Gwalior, and Jalandhar in North India, gaining fame, recognition, and numerous awards. Hindustani vidwans like Vishnu Digambar and Abdul Karim Khan held him in high esteem. In fact, Abdul Karim Khan learned a few kritis from Vasudevachar and incorporated them into his own performances.

Since sound recording devices were not available during his time, we are unable to listen to Vasudevachar's music today. However, his enduring legacy is a testament to the strength of his compositions (*uruppadis*). He stands as a stellar example of an “*Uttama Vaggeyakara*” (a composer who excels in both lyrics and setting it to music).

The first part of his Sri Vasudeva Keerthana Manjari was published in 1929, and several of his kritis became well-known in the music world. Pieces like “*Brochevareverura*” (Khamas), “*Bhajanaseyaradha*” (Dharmavati), “*Palukavathemira*” (Devamanohari), “*Marasithivemo Nannu*” (Poorvakalyani), “*Mahatmule*” (Rishabapriya), and “*Vande Nisa Maham*” (Hamsadhwani) earned widespread appreciation. The padhaprayogas (word usage), ragabhavas, and chittaswaras in both Sanskrit and Telugu were highly praised by both vidwans and rasikas alike. Acharya had a

special gift for setting chittaswaras. In 1956, the second part of Sri Vasudeva Keerthana Manjari was published, adding seventy more kritis with detailed swara and thala notations. After the release of this second volume, compositions such as "Mamavathu" (Hindola), "Shrimadadi Thyagaraja" (Kalyani), and "Rara Rajivalochana" (Mohanam) gained popularity. His impressive body of work and mastery over kritis earned him the affectionate title of "Abhinava Thyagaraja" among rasikas. Although his mother tongue was Kannada, it is notable that most of his kritis were in Sanskrit and Telugu, following the established traditions of the time. Acharya once told me that he composed in Telugu because it was the prevailing tradition, despite the fact that his own guru, Pattanam Subramanya Iyer, was a Tamilian. His early study of Sanskrit also proved invaluable when he began composing his kritis.

Vasudevachar spent his golden years at Kalakshetra in Chennai, where he was cared for by Rukmini Devi Arundale. Thanks to her efforts, the rasikas in Madras were able to understand and appreciate the greatness of his craft. It is noteworthy that he continued to teach music to

Rukmini Devi until his last days. When Kalakshetra decided to produce a dance drama based on the Valmiki Ramayana, it was Vasudevachar who composed the music for it.

I once wrote a detailed piece about his Kannada book "Naa Kanda Kalaavidharu," that was published in 1955 in 'The Hindu'. At that time, he was 90 years old. After my commentary was published, I took it to him and translated it for him. He was immensely happy and arranged to get a copy of his book, which he presented to me with a small handwritten note in Kannada that read, "For my viswapoorvagi Sri TS Parthasarathy avarige," and he signed off in Telugu. I will never forget that moment, and I still keep it as a treasured memory.

After that, at my request, he performed an alapane in Kambhoji raga, singing madhyama kala thanam and pallavi, saying, "This is how my Gurunathar used to sing," with considerable joy. He further smiled and mentioned that, at 90 years old, Rukmini Devi had given him a lot of work to do, including composing the music for the entire Valmiki Ramayana.

Guru kripaleka Sri Hari kripa galguna

(Courtesy Saraswathi Vaggeyakara Trust, Chennai)

Each of Vasudevacharya's compositions has a background of its own which is very interesting and of a thrilling nature. In the following few lines, I will briefly narrate, how his Kirti in Raga Pushpalatha (Pushpalathika) took shape

About forty years ago, one day Sri Acharya, on an invitation from one of his disciples went to see a drama Danashoora Karna enacted by a dramatic company of Mysore. It was the story of a contest between the two renowned warriors, Karna and Arjuna. Karna was in no way inferior to Arjuna in strength or skill. But yet he could not win over Arjuna! Why? Arjuna had blessings of his revered Guru Dronacharya, while Karna had unfortunately incurred the displeasure of his Guru Parasurama, who said "Let no asthra, which I have taught you be of any service to you at the time of need"

The drama had a tremendous effect on the mind of the composer. He returned home very late in the night, his mind full of the incident, full of sympathy for poor

Karna, who with all his great qualities failed completely for want of 'Guru Kripa'.

"How did you like the play?" asked his son who opened the door of his home to him. Sri Acharya made no reply. After about a few seconds the question was repeated. Again there was no reply. Annoyed at and upset with a queer silence, the son without uttering another word, went and slept. One could see the composer scribbling something on a scrap of paper, sitting in his room, the whole night, with the help of a dim candle light.

Early next morning Sri Acharya greeted his son with a smile on his face, "You asked me how I liked the play, did you not?..... Yes, it was excellent indeed. Every actor did his role exceedingly well. I enjoyed it" ...And then he came out with his brilliant new composition "Guru kripa leka Sri Hari kripa galguna?" This was working in my mind and so I was unable to answer you yesterday night. Do not mistake me" said the lovable father.

Multi-faceted musical persona

Ranjani Govind, Bangalore

A peep into vocalist RK Padmanabha's achievements while he turns 75.

What are your thoughts on Vijayadashami as a Guru? I ask Carnatic Vidwan RK Padmanabha who is surrounded by his students on the auspicious day taking his lessons and blessings, even as the vidwan has celebrated his milestone birthday in September.

"A guru is not just a teacher; he should be spiritually exalted to metamorphose his disciples into being divine performers. Mirroring divinity in melody is a guru's domain, a responsibility he shoulders," a conversation flags off in his music studio.

Is this a music boutique, you wonder when you run your eyes at RK Padmanabha's music studio above his residence in JP Nagar sporting all things related to music - from books, albums, tamburas, different instruments, audio systems, microphone and speaker devices to a multitude of the vocalist's performance and award pictures. "I wanted a sacred space for savouring music. My practice sessions and student-bonding happens here with Maa Saraswati blessing my pen," says, Sangeet Natak Akademi Awardee Padmanabha or RKP as he is affectionately known in the music circles.

Distinct persona

Having known RKP and his musical activities, one can stamp him as a 'musician with a difference.' Every facet of his life throws up a distinctive persona. Some see divinity in his music, some admire his huge repertoire of composers he deals with in each concert, scores of women have been learning kritis from his goshti gayana, many connoisseurs appreciate his ability to

compose and tune instantly on stage. For many he is an author with a musical flow, some are inspired to see him take up the mantle of being an organiser of huge music festivals, and his students say he is an affable guru with a penchant to hold friendly teaching sessions.

What are some of the most gratifying aspects of RKP's musical career, something he has been happy to bequeath to music connoisseurs?

"Rudrapatna my village was a place blessed with hundreds of musicians and Veda pundits. I kept thinking this is the time to give-back. I visualised a magnificent structure that would have musicians get together and respect classical music. My efforts to mobilise funds was worth it as before long, the 'Saptaswara Dhyana Mandir' took shape in a form of a 'tambura' at Rudrapatna. It has been 15 years since we are holding annual music congregations for Tyagaraja Aradhane and many other musical events," says RKP as he goes on to describe the Dhyana Mandir.

The entire structure - built at a cost of Rs. 1.10 crore - stands on the seven or sapta concept. It has seven steps with seven corners, with seven deities and musical instruments. Puja is conducted with musical mantras penned by RKP. The aarathi is by tanam; naivedya is done with pallavi. Archana contains Purandharadasa namavali. "Surrender to saptaswara is our way of worship," he explains.

Amazing range

Padmanabha, President of the Karnataka Ganakala Parishat for more than two decades, turned 75 on September 26, 2024 and the music world is abuzz to honour the impeccable musician known for his penchant for han-



RK Padmanabha receiving the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, from President Murmu

ding variety composers. His enviable sonorous range defies his age. In most of the smaller concerts and at villages where RKP teaches, he hardly uses a mike, say his senior students who travel with him for concerts and experience “nature-friendly music sessions in the open.”

Born in 1949, it's 70 years since RKP flagged off his voice for melodies. “Rudrapatna, a small village on the banks of River Cauvery in Arkalgud taluk of Hassan district in Karnataka where I was born has the record of producing the most number of Carnatic musicians in the country. I was not born into a musical family but Rudrapatna's soil and air permeates musical tarangas (waves) that chiselled the musicality in me! My father Krishna Dikshitar also brought me up in a purohit parampara. My interest in classical music was gradual and not hurried,” he says.

Childhood and music

RKP says as a five-year-old, he was exposed to top rung artistes of the time in Ranga-Geete (theatre music). Even his deep-range can be attributed to this initial exposure where open-throated singing was encouraged. “I even took up enacting Karna's role when I had to sing Kumara Vyasa's poems while being trained by the seasoned Gamaki by name Vasantha Lakshamma,” recalls RKP. He goes on to explain how scholar-veteran RV Srikantaiah, a genius, would enthrall connoisseurs with

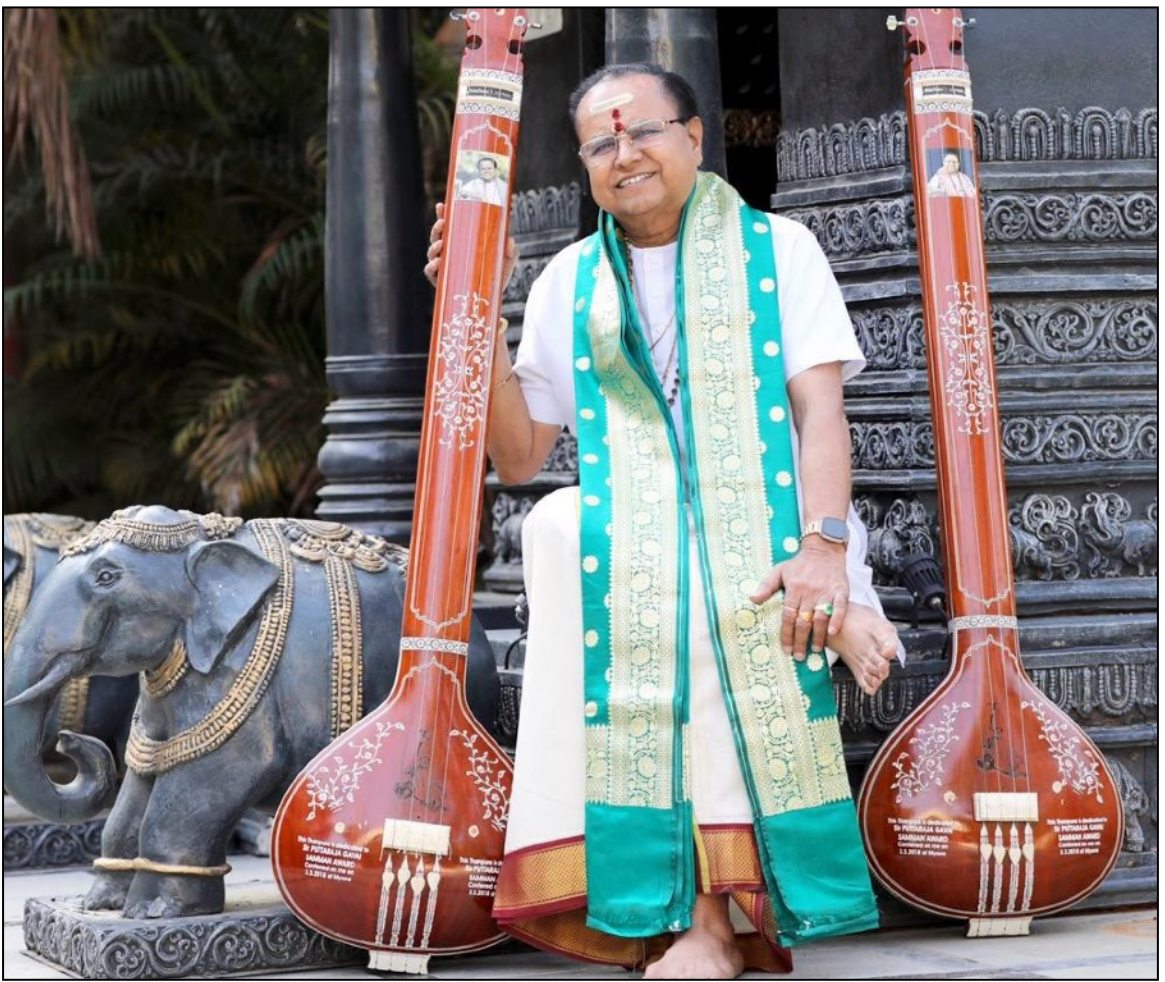
vintage Carnatic classical melodies informally on the streets of Rudrapatna.

Veterans of classical music who visited Rudrapatna during music festivals sang at the temples, at 100-pillared massive bungalows and on the banks of the Cauvery. “Every kind of celebration would have serious concerts tagged along. I was mesmerised with music vidwans and their silk-attires and their body language while they sang. As a six-year-old I remember waiting for hours to steal a glimpse of Violin Chowdiah as I was star-struck seeing his well-built personality, a sway replete with musical aura!” says RKP who couldn't wait running away to Mysore for furthering his study in academics and music. Soon he enrolled into Violin Chowdiah's Ayyanar College of Music in Mysore, setting his formal Carnatic beginning.

Gradually with dreams afloat, RKP entered Bangalore in his late teens and completed his B-Sc. Honours from Vijaya College in 1970. He represented Karnataka in Ball Badminton and soon bagged a job at SBI too. Veering back to music around 1974 he came under the veteran HV Krishnamurthy at the Vijaya College of Music. “It seemed magical. Advanced training from HVK helped me take up my first concert in 1975!” he says.

Master of many disciplines

Padmanabha is not just a musician, he is a lyricist and a music composer, author, director of sever-



al music shows, has trained thousands of students across the globe, has acted in musical theatre and has 75 written works to his credit, apart from a multitude of albums and awards. At 75, Padmanabha reveals “I have a lot more to do, and want to see Bengaluru as a city abuzz with classical melodies. An important branch of my spreading awareness is on maintaining shaarira samskarana (voice-culture), an aspect paramount for musicians for knowing their voices in exactitude.”

As one glances through the heaps of books and notes kept on his table RKP says after he worked on ‘Vadiraja’s Teertha Prabhandha’ where he documented the lesser-known aspects of the saint-composer’s visits to 10 sacred rivers in India, he is all set to share his own perspective of the saints Shankara-Ramanuja-Madhwa bringing a few compositions too on them. “While Vadirajaswamy has blessed me with my pen and

voice, I wanted to give back to society so I built the Vadiraja Kala Bhavana near Hulimavu to host music activities,” he says.

While RKPs 75 books on music include five music-based novels, he has 750 compositions to his credit mainly in Kannada, Sanskrit and Telugu. “I have composed Navagraha kritis in Kannada and tuned them, apart from 72 compositions in all the Melakarta ragas in Kannada,” he says.

Work on Purandaradasa

Talking of what he has enjoyed most apart from writing his autobiography, RKP says it was gratifying to work and research on the book ‘Purandara Pitamahare?’ where in he discovered the greatness of Pitamaha Purandara dasa while dissecting his contemplative genius. “Did you know why Purandara dasa might have preferred raga Mayamalavagowla for initial lessons to Karaharapriya, said to be more in vogue centuries

ago? Karaharapriya as a musical scale is rich for seasoned musicians to tackle its high frequency levels for swara prayogas and oscillations. But what made Mayamalavagowla's identity special in comparison was its inherent flat-notes, ideal for beginners who didn't need the use of gamakas while taking baby-steps in music! Although latest sound-frequency researches confirm this aspect about the scale and its benefits, Purandara with a foresight had taken the idea across as a true Pitamaha who scripted a musical history with his offering of basic Carnatic lessons in Mayamalavagowla," says RKP.

While RKP is forever working towards reaching out music to humanity in general in all corners of the globe, what requires mention are some of his gargantuan efforts -- as the Managing Trustee of Rudrapatna Sangeetotsava Samiti Trust -- in seeing that Rudrapatna is on its 22nd year celebrating its annual Sangeethotsava bringing in world-renowned vidwans to a musically-rich 'Sangeeta Grama.'

About Karnataka Ganakala Parishat activities that he helms since 20 years, a sabha purposed to give impetus and promote musicians of Karnataka, RKP says the Parishat's activities reaches out to rural pockets in all districts and towns with performances, schooling and workshop activities to expose villagers to idioms in classical music. "Our destination is reaching out melodies to the dis-advantaged!" he proudly says.

Amongst the multitude of recognitions and awards he has received, one of the most gratifying gesture etched in his memory is, "A woman from a rural belt in Kaiwara, Karnataka after my concert ran to me and, with welled-up eyes and folded hands, extended a ten-rupee note that she dug from her cotton potli and said it was purely divine to listen to my songs in Kannada! Such straightforward experiences make one more humble. What more can any musician ask for?"

RKP's novel - Ananthanaada RK Padmanabha's pen has coursed along a multitude of written works related to classical music, but his inter-

ests in theatre and novels are another side to his creative abilities. "Fiction has interested me and being a musician helped me with a flow of storyline for my novel 'Ananthanaada' in Kannada (also available in English) purely based on classical music. My passion saw me race through my thought-flow in just two months in 2011," he says.

'Ananthanaada' brings in a host of technical musical aspects entwined in its plot and flow. The strength and essence of music and the capacity of its influence on living form the deliberative core of this novel.

Says RKP in his novel "Overall, there has been an effort in trying to articulate the wholesomeness inherent in the classical genres. In my musical career spanning a few decades I am satisfied and happy experiencing the world of naada. This heightened feeling is not termed an accomplishment or triumph by me, but a state made possible with the blessings I receive from Saint Vadiraja, from whom I draw my power and strength. Anything good that this book brings forth is in entirety dedicated to Guru Vadiraja."

(Courtesy: The Hindu)

(Ranjani Govind is a Bengaluru-based author and freelance journalist covering culture and music. She served The Hindu for twenty-five years).



SRLKM mourns the loss of Vid. Vrinda Acharya, a gifted musician who contributed several insightful articles to *Lalitha Kala Tarangini*. She was a musician who deeply valued the aesthetics of music and a scholar whose work left a lasting impact on the music world. Team SRLKM prays for her *sadgati* and extends heartfelt condolences to her family members and fans. She will be missed.

GV Krishna Prasad, an organiser of tall order

Neyveli Santhanagopalan, Chennai

Bangalore has held a special place in my heart since my youth. The encouragement and support I've received from music enthusiasts here are beyond words. I began performing in Bangalore at the age of 20, and each visit fills me with energy and enthusiasm, thanks to the wholehearted response of the audience. While a musician is shaped by their Guru, it is the audience that truly makes a performer. I've often shared - and even debated - that Bangalore provides a unique and nurturing environment for the flourishing of Carnatic music.

Shri Krishna Prasad was one of the earliest organisers to recognise my talent and offer me a place in Bangalore's music ecosystem. He played a key role in supporting me through various phases of my career. From a young, budding musician, I have grown to where I am today under his watchful eyes. I first met him during his tenure at the Bangalore Gayana Samaja, and immediately found him to be a very friendly and affable person. As I interacted with him more, I realised he was not only a great organiser but also a wonderful human being. His kindness and warmth towards musicians was, in my view, his defining trait.

Although he is no longer with us, I can never forget his approachability and how he treated musicians like family members. During his tenure as the Secretary of Gayana Samaja, I performed countless times, and each time, he would personally call me to fix the concert. His thoughtful nature often reminded me of Shri Yagnaraman of Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, who also took great care in selecting co-artists to ensure

that the audience experienced the best music possible.

Shri Krishna Prasad meticulously planned the conduct of concerts from every angle, which is why his events were always a grand success. Needless to say, his concerts and festivals consistently drew large audiences. Although Shri. Krishna Prasad did not choose to be a performing musician, he was filled with music in his heart. He dedicated his entire life to the promotion and preservation of classical music in its purest form. Today, if Carnatic music has reached every corner of the city, it is largely due to the efforts of Shri Krishna Prasad, who served as a crucial catalyst in Bangalore's cultural journey. This sentiment is not just my opinion; it is shared by all musicians who have had the privilege of knowing him.

Through his esteemed sabha, Shri. Krishna Prasad also encouraged research-oriented discussions in the form of lecture demonstrations, covering a wide range of topics, including Vaggeyakaras. His sabha in Banashankari is a unique and special setting where I always looked forward to performing. I would arrive an hour early, spending time with him on the ground floor hall before heading to the first-floor auditorium for my concert. The hospitality I received there was unparalleled, and I cherished each of my performances. I vividly remember the concert I performed during the Sankranti festival of 2018 at the open-air auditorium.

I hold his musical family in the highest regard, as they have all dedicated their lives to music. GV Ranganayakamma and GV Neela were instru-



Neyveli Santanagopalan performing at SRLKM during Sankranti festival in 2018. CN Chandrashekar on Violin, BC Manjunath on Mridangam and Somashekar Jois on Konnagolu.

mental in nurturing many students. His relative, Jayashree Varadarajan, a disciple of Smt. GV Ranganyakamma, is a well-known music personality in the Bay Area and founded the Rama Lalitha Kala Mandir School of Fine Arts in Sunnyvale, California. Shri Krishna Prasad had great respect and affection for his sisters, whom he cherished deeply. Families like his are rare; they all shared a profound belief in Goddess Saraswati and in the idea that only music can lead to moksha.

Shri. Krishna Prasad was exceptional at identifying the potential of young artistes. Many young musicians he recognised decades ago are now top-notch performers in our music world. He provided a platform for these emerging talents and encouraged them, believing they would be the future of music. My own daughter, Sriranjani Santanagopalan, benefited immensely from his guidance and support.

I also recall one of my longest stays in Bangalore, when I was invited to oversee and judge participants for Kalavantha-2018. Shri Krishna Prasad's organisational abilities were on full display, and I thoroughly enjoyed being part of this prestigious event.

When I think of Shri Krishna Prasad, I picture a tall figure in a safari suit. It is rare to find an organiser of his caliber. Such individuals leave an everlasting mark on our hearts and minds. He fulfilled his duties with great aplomb, and musicians across generations will remain indebted to

him. I believe he is one of the few who truly fulfilled the purpose and goals of his life.

SRLKM Receives the Blessings of Sri Yathiraja Jeeyar Swami



Ten esteemed music institutions were honoured with the title 'Sri Ramanuja Kala Seva Sree,' conferred by Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar Swami of Yathiraja Mutt during the ongoing Margazhi Sangeethotsavam.

Dr.Yogananda MR, Hon. Secretary, SRLKM accepted this honour on behalf of the Kala Mandira on December 10, 2023. We dedicate this honour to our beloved Shri. GV Krishna Prasad. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all our rasikas who have been part of our journey and seek their continued support.

A Titan moves on: Sri. K Srikantiah (1928-2024)

Sachi R Sachidananda, Bangalore

This morning (4th September, 2024), I received a call from Smt. Mysore Prabha, an only child of Sri. K Srikantiah, well known to Carnatic rasikas around the world for the blog, 'A home called Parvathi'. Sri KS had moved on...passing away in his sleep in the hospital last night at 2:30AM.

A full life of 96 years has come to an end. A titan has moved on. A man who endeared himself to musicians and rasikas around the world by hosting home concerts for over 70 years has breathed his last. The famous 'A home called Parvathi, Mysore' will miss its patriarch forever.

Or, Will not Sri. KS, like the ever-green musicians we have seen -Lalgudi, Madurai Somu and GNB,

adorn the celestial spheres and live forever in the world of music? In fact, I believe so. If there is indeed 'The Next World' for all of us, it better be full of music, and give us rasikas like Sri. KS and the ever-great musicians we know in Carnatic music.

As someone who spent a few teen years in Mysore in the sixties, I knew of the "Putturao Family" and their music concerts. I also knew that the family was behind the establishment of the famous Chowdiah Hall on Sankey Tank Road in later years. But I really came to know about the family when they started a blog in 2009 called "A home called Parvathi" to share





Photo taken at Bidaram Krishnappa's Ramamandira in 1939 - Chowdiah (Hon. Secretary) in the centre with K Putturao (President), T Gururajappa (Chowdiah's brother), Puttaswamiah, Pankajamma and Mangalamma (daughters of Chowdiah) - Photo courtesy A Home called "Parvathi"

archived recordings. I came from Australia where I was then, met Sri. K Srikantiah, and volunteered to work on the blog and I became a lifelong friend and a great admirer of Sri K Srikantiah.

Sri. K Srikantiah was one of the many distinguished sons of the famous Mysore lawyer Sri. K Putturao. Sri. Putturao had played a big role in the running of the famous Bidaram Krishnappa Prasanna Sitarama Mandira, working closely with the legendary violinist Mysore T. Chowdiah. Sri. Putturao died in his fifties. Of his many sons, a 28-year old Srikantiah, just married, inherited his passion for culture and Carnatic music. He pursued this passion from 1958 till his death in 2024. He spent from his own pocket every rupee needed for the concert series year after year, bringing the best of musicians to perform in the special Pandal he used to put up in his large home. He set up the Sri Rama Mantapam right under the big Parijata tree that he had ensured flowered copiously around Sri Ramavami every year!

Sri K Srikantiah regaled me with his stories as I sat in his home, working on the blog with Smt. Prabha. He did not give up organising concerts till he turned 90 and his family found his efforts

to organise the Putturao Festival in Mysore Jagannathan Palace too hard for him. He was a perfectionist and demanded the best from the auditorium, attendees, audio engineers, photographers, and of course musicians. He was not satisfied until he saw the large 800-seater Jagannathan Palace auditorium filled up, whether it was a concert of Vid. KJ Yesudas, or Mandolin U Srinivas, or the Mysore Brothers. The venue had shifted from the grounds of Parvathi after the property had been remodelled.

I do not have much to say, more than point every rasika and musician to visit the blog, "**A Home called Parvathi**". The blog itself was the idea of Sri. Vishwanath Murthy, a nephew of Sri. K Srikantiah living in Princeton, New Jersey. He architected the blog in 2009 and shaped its ethos with his erudite pen. He goes by the name Nirvana. It is a magnum opus of Sri. K Srikantiah and is filled with chronicles of his endeavours over 70 years. I can simply say this:

Mysore has this ineffable climate for art and music like no other place on earth. It has also produced great musicians, composers, and titans among rasikas like Sri. K Srikantiah. These are the stars that smile from the skies forever. Om Tat Sat

Events at Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira

Dr.Yogananda MR, Bangalore

It has been more than a year since we lost our revered and dear Krishna Prasad mama. He was the guiding light in all of Kalamandira's musical endeavours and his mantra was that music must flow continuously.

Keeping his ideals as our beacon, we have sincerely tried to tread in his footsteps and continue to serve the cause of Carnatic music as he envisioned for the Mandira. We have organised over 35 events and concerts this past year as a tribute to our beloved Kittu mama as we fondly remember him. We have had concerts from budding young talent to artists who have performed the world over. We intend to nurture

young talent and provide a platform for them to grow.

Sri Krishna Prasad's vision and hard work has always guided us through this journey of running the institution. We remain committed to bringing music rasikas quality Carnatic music and creating memorable evenings

We are deeply grateful for the ongoing support and presence of our sangeetha rasikas. Their encouragement and goodwill have been invaluable to us. We hope to continue to grow as a music institution, building a strong musical community that all of you feel a part of. Together, let us all strive to enrich our classical music.



Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira (R)

9th Main Road, Banashankari, 2nd Stage, Bangalore, 560 070.

Tribute to Shri. GV Krishna Prasad



Sangeetha Vedantha Dhurina Rajkumar Bharathi

Rajashree Yogananda, Bangalore

I) Can you tell us briefly about your upbringing and how it has influenced your Music?

RB: Music was in my blood. My mother, my uncle, my father, grandfather and all seniors in the family were well-versed in music. They were not concert performers, but they had a substantially good foundation in music. In fact, my mother used to sing very well and she has even given concerts. So, I think music was already with me. My mother used to teach me the basics of Carnatic music like saralai varisai and so on and also some simple Bharati songs. There used to be a radio in our house - in those days only radio used to be there. Some film songs used to be broadcast and if I liked or if some song im-

pressed me, knowingly or unknowingly, I used to sing that song. That is how they found out that there seems to be an element of music in this boy.

I will add a little more to the above question as to how it shaped my singing. I was also introduced to proper authentic learning and at the same time the interest was sustained because I was encouraged by my parents to sing Bharati songs and also some film songs. This also played a vital role as you did not force the child to learn even when he got bored. This is one way of catching the interest of a youngster. The interest in music is what must be given proper





Rajkumar Bharathi with his mother Smt. Lalitha Bharathi

attention, not trying to put him in the classical way only like the teacher coming at a particular time and he has to sing whether he likes it or not. In hindsight, I feel any child who is taught music should have this freedom also.

2) *How were you influenced by your great grandfather Subramanya Bharati?*

RB: Honestly, as a youngster, I had no idea about Subramanya Bharati. I used to sing his songs because my mother used to teach those songs. My mother used to take part in many Bharatiyar functions and I used to be surprised to see my great grandfather's photo in those venues too! Now, I know they were Bharatiyar meetings. I then understood that this man must be of great importance, because people would give a lot of respect to my mom. That was the first impression I had about my great grandfather. But as I grew up and particularly when I started giving concerts, I would be introduced as Bharatiyar's great grandson and many people would stay back and request me to sing Bharatiyar's song in the concerts. Hence, I had to increase my repertoire of Bharatiyar songs. After the concerts too they would wait to meet me and feel very happy that I was Bharatiyar's great grandson. As I grew up, in my 20's, people used to come and say that they were not fortunate enough to see Subramanya Bharati in their lifetime but felt happy to

have met his grandson. I would be very moved when people came to talk or hold my hand and caress me and give me some small notes or whatever. They used to say that at least we get the feeling of touching Bharati. Those words sank in me and as I grew up, I blossomed and understood the beauty of those lyrics. Now when I sing his songs with bhava or emotions, I can see how people are moved by it. That is when I took an interest and started reading more about Bharati and his works. Over a period of time, I have understood that he is an avatar. He was far ahead of his time in his thinking and for his large heartedness. He is a great advaiti with his feeling of oneness for all living beings. These things have really influenced me to a great extent, I adore Bharati.

3) *What do the words adversity and challenge mean to you? How have you learnt to handle it?*

RB: Ummm!! Very nice question. One never understands the meaning of these words unless one comes to experience it, isn't that so? By my nature, I am a person who quickly accepts things as they are. It is not a cultivated habit. If there is something that is unfavourable, I try to make the situation favourable to me and if it cannot be done, I just accept it and go on with it. I never fight. I am a firm believer that one should not fight with life, one should flow with life. There may be situations which may turn your life upside down. In my life, all of a sudden, I was staring at a situation when my voice started giving me problems. I tried my best to address it. I hopped from one doctor to another. I sensed that this was not an ordinary problem. Finally, I landed with Dr. Mohan Kameshwaran, who is a great ENT specialist. He was the first doctor to tell me that this was not an ordinary issue. Due to his hectic schedule, I could only meet him past midnight. They inserted a tube in my throat to examine, it was some scope and now I have forgotten the name of that test.

He started explaining to me the results of the test and by his very tone I got the feeling that it was not okay. I looked at my wife's face and she was devastated. But, I was not devastated. I just took it at face value and said fine. This is why as

I said in the beginning, I do not prepare myself for everything. It is in my nature to accept any situation as it is.

I did not react to the news by crying, shouting or feeling totally downtrodden – nothing! Blank! The expression was simply blank! I did not want to fight or resist it, by thinking "I will do this and I will do that". What I did was by not putting up a fight and by being non-resistant was my way of fighting it. Do you see the point? I could stand up to it by being non resistant and tried to do my very best. So an adversity or challenge if I can handle it or if I can do something about it, I will definitely do my best.

For the past twenty plus years, you would have noticed how far I have travelled. I even recently gave a concert in your Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira. It was definitely not by sheer will power. I do not know how to term it, but I said to myself let me handle it, I will try my best. If it

comes, it comes, if it doesn't come it doesn't come. I do not know how else to put it. It was not a fight but my way to try and set it right and still if it did not work, I will go the way it goes. It is as simple as that.

4) *There must be some memorable concerts due to many reasons. Could you share it with the readers?*

RB: There are many memorable concerts , one such memorable concert was the one that I gave at The Music Academy. My first senior slot concert for The Music Academy was somewhere in the year 1998-1999.

In that concert, I wanted to sing an unusual pallavi. I wanted to sing griha bedha i.e., two ragas using griha bedha. In those days, you had to give a list of items for the academy concerts unlike the present scenario. I gave the list of songs and under the Raga, Tana, Pallavi, I wrote Raga, Tana, Pallavi - double raga. Many many years back, I had listened to Dr. Balamurali's 'gri-

Rajkumar Bharathi's journey : 1) Receiving a prize in the music competition, 2) Receiving the Rajaji Tambura prize at the Tamil Isai Sangam 3) Receiving the AIR Music competition First prize from Veena Balachander in 1975, 4) Receiving a Tambura prize from MS Subbulakshmi at Indian Fine Arts in 1976





Receiving the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for Music for Dance in 2015

ha bedha', where he used the ragas Abhogi and Valachi. It was so vivid in my memory. I wanted to sing something like that. Since many people have already sung in pentatonic scale, I wanted to do something else. It is my habit not to practice for a very long time. For any kutcheri, I do not set all things beforehand. In the sense, only just a day or two before the concert, I will have some idea, but pallavi, I do not practice like that. I went and asked Smt. Sulochana Pattabhiraman, who was like my mom and also a friend and from whom I used to take advice. I said, "I want to do one griha bedha concert. She said "why do you want to take such a risk?". I also wanted to use a different talam. I was casually singing Sriranjani a day earlier and while singing Sriranjani, I realised that if 'Gandharam' is made 'Shad-jam' then you get 'Hamsanaada'. That was very thrilling for me and I decided to use that. I also wanted to do something new in the talam. So, in the laghu, what I did was for the first beat, I kept 4 kalai, then for the small finger-3, ring finger-2, middle finger-1, so it becomes 4-3-2-1 and then for the second half, it was two drutam-s (4). So, I composed the Pallavi "Sriranjani Manini Maamava Hamsanada vinodini - Sri"

I asked Sulochana mami what talam should I say it as if somebody asked for it. She said, I will tell you just before the concert. She was in greater

tension than me. Just before the concert began, she came and told me, Rajkumar, name of the talam is "Chaturmukam". I said "Ok ma", I also did not question her why it was Chaturmukam. I thought it was bahu kalai. She said "no, no don't use those words - just chaturmukam". The Pallavi went off very well. It was a great thrilling experience. Afterwards a great musicologist came to me and said - "what man, I noticed you sang something in a new tala, what tala is that?" I said "Chaturmukam". He just kept quiet and went away. I was scared that he might object but somehow there was no objection from him. It was very well received. That is one incident.

Then there was another incident in Mysore, where there were celebrations held on saint Kanakadasa. There were a series of concerts to commemorate him. I searched for many Kanakadasa compositions, and found some new compositions. I tuned them and made it a full fledged Kanakadasa concert. When I went and asked the organisers, should the concert be full of Kanakadasa songs they said "no no only one or two Kanakadasa songs is okay, the rest can be the usual Katcheri songs don't bother". But, I chose to stick to my plan. So from beginning till mangalam I sang only Kanakadasa songs. I still remember the organiser while giving vote of thanks, said in Kannada, "Namagella naachike



Receiving the prestigious TTK Award in 2019 instituted by The Madras Music Academy

aagathe, evaru Tamil Nadu inda bandu namma mundhe idée Kanakadasa pada ne ittukondu ondu katcheri maadiddhaare. Nammavarella bandu bari ondu, yeradu maatra haadidaru. (we must be ashamed of ourselves, he has come from Tamil Nadu and has presented a concert full of Kanakadasa songs whereas our own people sing one or two songs).

Of course, I am not boasting about myself. I was very happy I could do that and people were able to appreciate it. I also had the opportunity to learn new compositions, isn't it?

5) Any interesting anecdotes in your musical career which has left a lasting mark?

RB: I will give two instances. There was a concert in Tiruppur. Tiruppur is a place near Coimbatore and It is basically known for garments, particularly inner garments. Once a mridangist by the name Ramanathapuram MN Kandasami Pillai asked me to give a concert in Tiruppur. He said that earlier there used to be sabhas in Tiruppur and Carnatic music had flourished well in those days. Now, there was a lull, and that it had to be revived and youngsters like me had to come and contribute to its revival. Having given a successful concert with Ramanathapuram

Kandasami Pillai, I was invited again, this time for a temple Kumbhabhishekam with the accompaniment of Madurai Balasubramaniam on Violin and Salem Srinivasan on the Mridangam.

The concert started around 6:30 in the evening. The audience consisted of many school children and from our judgment we could say that they may not welcome Carnatic music to a great extent. What I thought was, let us sing as many Tamil compositions as possible. So I started with a Tamil composition on Ganapathi as usual. I was singing swarams for the song 'Ganapathiye Neeeye Gunanidhiye' in Hamsadhwani and started rendering the Kalpana swarams. I saw a person coming towards the dais, while the mridangist was playing, he disturbed him, distracted him and gave a slip of paper in his hand and went. The mridangist was trying not to encourage it. I said he is playing so don't give him anything now. But he would not listen. He caught hold of Mridangist hand, gave the slip of paper and went away. I noticed it as I was singing and once the song got over, I asked the Mridangist,

"What is it?"

He showed me the slip of paper.

"Do you know what was written on the slip of paper"? it was written "Stop Carnatic music! sing film songs". (Carnatic music ke nirattavum, mellisai paadalgal paadavum). I did not immediately react. I did not get angry, nothing! I saw the person who gave the paper seated in the audience. I called him and asked "who gave you this slip of paper?". He said "the secretary gave me and he told me to tell you sir to sing only light music".

Why? I asked.

"Because many school children are seated and if you sing swaras, ragas and ta da ri na na..., they may not like it or enjoy it and may get up and go. In order to avoid it please sing light music songs".

Then I told the person "how can you come to a conclusion that the audience will leave? Who told you that?" I do not know where I got those words from. I was very calm, no anger, no frustration, nothing! I remembered the words of my Gururji TV Gopalakrishnan sir. He had told me on numerous occasions how to sing to various types of audiences. He even used to quote from Bharata's natya shastra how to sing to an elite audience, how to sing to a common man, how to sing to an audience full of ladies and children. It had to be simple, appealing, attractive and all those things. I prayed to my guru and prayed to the Lord to somehow give me the courage and ability to handle it.

Then I adopted the method of Nagaswaram style of singing. Nagaswaram style includes a lot of brighas, long passages, long kaarvais, all those things. You will be surprised by the time I finished the raga, the audience were totally changed, their mood got changed. They applauded on many occasions and I thought "wow! I have passed this test! I had to sing for two hours and sustain their interest.

At the end of the concert, there is usually vote of thanks isn't it?. The same secretary who had asked me to stop singing Carnatic music said "I apologise sir for whatever happened. If this is the way Carnatic music can be sung, I think

everybody will be interested. All the school children seated in the audience must now look up to Carnatic music. You should develop an interest, learn and sing like this". It became an anticlimax. What was an uneasy concert became a very successful concert. This is one incident.

Then there is another incident. There was a concert in Srirangapattana, near Mysore. The person who organised the concert told me after a long time, they are organising a Carnatic music concert, therefore "you should come sir". I said okay and went there along with Mysore Manjunath and Bhadrachar, and someone else was on upa-pakkavadyam. Sorry, I do not recall the name. I was in Mysore Dasaprakash hotel, we took a cab and went to Srirangapattana. As soon as I got down from the car, two people were there to receive me. One of them asked "Mikkavarella Yelli?" in Kannada meaning "where are the others?" I was shocked. I asked "what do you mean by mikkavararu?" He said "Ade ri keyboardu, drumsu avarelli?" Yaavaaga barthare? "When are they coming?"

I asked him "which concert are you talking about?" He replied "Ade ri Rajkumar Bharati concert" I said "Naane Rajkumar Bharati" (I am Rajkumar Bharati). He said "Neeva?" He was shocked because, according to him, he thought Dr. Rajkumar the famous actor and the popular Kannada actress Bharathi would be coming. Ha ha ha!! When the organisers said Rajkumar Bharathi concert, he thought those two actors would be coming and he had printed and sent pamphlets to all the nearby villages and had ordered for some 25,000 bisibelebath Donne and had taken care of everything else. He was shell shocked!! I too was shell shocked!!

I did not know what to do. Then we went to the concert platform. It was a scene to see people sitting on the compound walls. You do not see Carnatic music audiences seated on the compound walls. I thought "today I will have a tough time". You know what I did? I parked my car just behind the stage and told the driver to be in a state of readiness.



The ARISI: RICE, Grains of Rice production by Apsara Arts Foundation was a significant cultural event, where the music was composed by Rajkumar Bharathi. This magnum opus was attended by prominent personalities, including the Consul General of Singapore, Mr. Aravinth, and Mr. N Murali of the Music Academy. The production brought together a team of dancers from Singapore and Bali, representing a fusion of cultural heritage from various regions.

In case something happens and they start pelting stones, we have to run away. I started the concert with 'brocheva' and continued. In between, the organiser came to us and said 'our producer is out of mood sir, can you sing some film songs?'

I said "I am not used to singing film songs on stage man, I cannot do it". "But sir, our producer is out of mood sir".

I said "let him be"

He said "but he will not pay"

I said "if he does not pay, okay"

But Bhadrachar was worried about money. He said "Anna, why do you say that? Let him pay anna"

I said, I just want to leave this place after the Katcheri, whether he pays or not. But nothing happened. So after two hours, we finished the concert and left. These are the two incidents.

6) *Your take on how music should be taught to children and parents role in it. A word of advice.*

RB: I think music should not be thrust on anybody or any child. First let the child get exposed to music. Let the child be exposed to various forms of music. If it shows an interest, like some children beat on the table may have some inclination towards learning a rhythm instrument,

some children will like playing violin, flute or veena.

It should be very natural, and you have to assess the child. The child's capacity to respond to music; suppose you give a phrase, whether they are able to appreciate it, whether they are able to reproduce it immediately or if it takes time. All these things have to be assessed and depending on the interest you should talk to the child, find out what its interests are. They may like bhajans or light songs or film songs. Some children may like classical. It varies. That is why I said don't thrust.

Then to prepare the child, it has to be ear trained. That is what they do in western music. It is very interesting. They play a note first to the child, Dang Dang Dang..... then they ask the child to listen to that. Then they play another note lower and ask the child "is this note higher or lower?" you see how they introduce? Most of them say it is lower. Then, they play a note higher. There should be sufficient noticeable difference. Then if you ask such questions, make the children participate, then they will have an interest in knowing what is what. Slowly, for Indian style of music you can introduce *Shakthi Sahita Ganapatim* the child will be interested in learning the song or *Kalai vani Un*

Kalai..... simple songs. You can teach these simple songs and also Sa ri ga ma pa da ni sa.

Therefore ear training to be able to recognise different tones, and then reading the child's interest and capacity, we have to take it forward. Teach simple songs and also make the child listen to simple songs (It is a big field, you cannot say just like that). These are some of the things I have noticed and tried to put into practice.

Role of Parents:

The parents also should be able to understand what the child wants. It is not what the parents want, it is what the child wants. They should consult a proper guru and then decide what art should be taught to the child. In music, whether it is vocal, percussion or instrument. The guru should be able to guide the parents. The parents should lovingly indulge in making the child learn music. They should not set a goal in the beginning itself. I am starting now, can I do arrangement in one year? It does not work like that.

When we go to school, we start with pre kindergarten, lower kindergarten and so forth. Only after finishing the 12th grade, we are admitted to the University. Art or music is also like that. You cannot do magic in one or two years. That should not be the goal. Parents must understand this. The child has to learn the art properly. What the parents have to understand is that learning an art is a great thing in a child's life. It teaches so many things to the child in his or her life.

How to be in harmony, how to be equipoised and not get excited. They will be able to handle any situation. They will be in harmony with most of the people they move with. It is a very big subject.

7) *Now you are into composing music. As a composer, you are highly respected and sought after in the field of dance. How challenging is it?*

RB: Of course, it is very challenging and very fulfilling. One should understand that composing and singing are not the same. Giving a performance is different. Composing is totally different. You need a totally different mindset and a

totally different capacity to be able to do this. Just because we have learnt many compositions and learnt many Korvais, you cannot become a composer. It is a different field altogether. But, I thoroughly love it, because each composition is different. Each dancer is different, each dancer's expectation is different, their capacity is different. The same song, you may have to do it for different dancers also. I have done it on many occasions. It cannot be the same, it has to be different each time. Unless you have freshness in mind, you can never approach it. It is a very fulfilling and very enjoyable job.

8) *Can we say Karnataka was your second home given your popularity and in singing devaranamas?*

RB: Absolutely, I owe a lot to Karnataka for my stature or status in Carnatic music today. My guru TVG was instrumental in making this happen. During the Madras December season in 1984, he introduced me to Sri Narayanaswami Rao of Sri Rama Seva Mandali, Chamarajapet, Bangalore. I have narrated this many times. Let me say it one more time. I was having problems with my voice and I very much wished TVG sir would not come to the concert. To my surprise and fear, I suddenly saw him entering with three or more people. After the concert, he took me to one of them and said "see, I told you, how does he sing?" Immediately that gentleman told me "April, such and such a date will be your concert". TVG sir scolded me for not telling him about the concert that evening. He further said "I brought Sri Narayanaswamy for you".

Narayanaswamy Rao gave me the first concert in Chamarajapet. It was my first entry into Karnataka. From then on, I marched ahead singing in many places. During Ramanavami and Ganesh Chaturthi, I used to be fully booked and 99% of my concerts were in Karnataka. I have sung in many places in Bangalore - Chamarajapet, Seshadripuram, Jayanagar, Vyalikaval and many other places. I have gone to Tiptur, Tumkur, Arasikere, Shimoga, Bhadravathi, Hubli, Mysore, Ramanathapura, Hulikal, Dodda Magge, Chikka Magge, Chikamagalur so many places.

I always have special respect for Devaranamas. I am a man who loves languages, so I used to take the lyrics seriously, note down the meanings and sing properly. TVG sir was also very particular about it. I learnt the language and used to converse in Kannada. So over a period of time, I became very close to Karnataka. Do you know what they would say? "Nammavaru ri evaru" (He is one of us). They would not say I was from Tamil Nadu, those differences never existed. "Rajkumar Bharathi andre, Nammavaru". I enjoyed this sort of patronage in Karnataka, and I was very happy to have been able to sing so many Dasa Sahityas, Devaramanas. I will never forget this.

8) *If you were not in this field, what other field would have been your choice to pursue.*

RB: God only knows. Ha! Ha! I think music was the only thing I ever knew in my life. Probably, I might have done something in literature. I did Engineering, but I am not a natural engineer,

very sorry to say that. I am a natural musician. I was born for music, I am very sure about it.

Therefore, I am not able to answer what field I would have chosen. The one thing I am interested in and totally not related to art is driving a car. Ha! Ha! I love driving cars. So probably, I would have done something there.

(We at SRLKM feel extremely happy on having conferred the award 'Sangeetha Vedantha Dhureena' to the one and only Sri Rajkumar Bharathi. The interview with him for our LKT magazine is an eye opener as there are many take aways for everyone. We have thoroughly enjoyed doing the interview and we are sure that you will feel the same too. May his tribe increase!!)

Himamshu on Rajkumar Bharathi

I consider Shri Rajkumar Bharathi to be a truly special musician of my time. It is rare to come across a musician like him. I had the privilege of being closely associated with him and had the honour of inviting him to perform at numerous prestigious music festivals in Mysore, including Ramanavami, the Ganesha Festival, marriage concerts, and more. His mother, Smt. Lalitha Bharathi, often accompanied him on these occasions. I frequently arranged for him to perform with esteemed artists such as T. Rukmini, Guruvayur Dorai, and Umayalpuram Sivaraman. I still vividly remember the unforgettable concert he performed at our Ganesh Festival (SPVGMC Trust), accompanied by BU Ganesh Prasad on the violin, Umayalpuram Sivaraman on the mridangam and Ramachar on Kanjira. It was a truly special performance that remains etched in my memory. A few years ago, I even had the opportunity to organise one of his workshop where he covered rare compositions of Subramania Bharathi and TV Gopalakrishnan.

It is truly unfortunate that God took away his voice during his prime career. However, I deeply admire how he has overcome this loss with remarkable strength and grace. He has since channeled his passion into the fields of music direction and composition, where he is now highly sought after and continues to inspire. His ability to rise above this grief and thrive in new areas is a testament to his unwavering dedication to the art.

I am very pleased that Lalitha Kala Tarangini is featuring a detailed interview with him in this edition. I encourage all readers, especially young and aspiring musicians, to read it and strive to emulate him in every way. In past decades, musicians like Lalgudi Jayaraman and Umayalpuram Sivaraman looked up to their predecessors and became exemplary artists. Unfortunately, this value system and culture have been waning in recent times. A true musician must be well-rounded and developed in all aspects. Shri Rajkumar Bharathi stands as a remarkable example of what a musician should aspire to be.

Yathiraja...Gaana... Amruthavarshini



An ensemble of 75 musicians performing during the 75th birthday celebration of Yathiraja Jeeyar Swami

Shri. BK Sriram, Bangalore

About a little over 10 years ago, a Saint with pure white attire was walking along a temple premises with a cane basket full of colourful flowers on his head. All of a sudden, the basket broke open and all the colourful flowers fell on the Saint and he became colourful. The colourful Saint made the entire world around him 'Colourful'

When he completed his B.Com. degree at the age of 20 in 1969, he informed his parents and older brother that he did not wish to pursue a career for financial gain, but rather dedicate himself to serving humanity. His parents agreed and his favourite aunt encouraged his wish. His

older brother assured food and shelter. Thus began Tiru Swami's journey in 1969 and he has not turned back since then. It has been 55 years of "Service to Humanity".

The first one of the 3 Adhyayas of his poorvashrama - The most appropriate platform he chose was Rashtrotthana Parishath as a Pracharak (voluntary social worker) in RSS and worked under his favourite leader Sri Madhava Rao whom he considers a friend, philosopher and guide and one who shaped his personality.

He achieved many feats there and the most unbelievable one being the Bharata Bharathi Publication, a short life story project of 500+ eminent Indian personalities.

During the 2nd Adhyaya of his social life, he joined the 'Adarsha Education Institution', where his love for traditional Carnatic classical music bloomed when he started organising concerts, lec-dems and special feature programmes under the umbrella 'Adarsha Bhavana' in Malleswaram. It became a highly popular platform for music, where he invited legends and doyens of the music fraternity, such as Vid. Veena Doreswamy Iyengar, Vid. Anoor Ramakrishna, Vid. HV Krishnamurthy, and Sangeetha Kalanidhi Dr. RK Srikantan etc. He compromised on his own single lunch a day and personally ferried these legendary musicians to Melukote almost daily during the 'Pallavotsavam'. The 'Adarsha Bhavana' became an iconic musical platform in the north of Bangalore due to his passion for promoting divine art.

The 3rd Adhyaya as an Honorary Director of Public Relations at ISKCON became even more phenomenal when he created a cultural revolution through his brainchild "Krishna Kalakshetra". He literally flooded all forms of Indian traditional art be it classical music, devotional music, dance, music-dance features at every available special occasion like Janmashtami, Vaikunta Ekadashi etc., On a lighter note, sometimes there were longer queues to meet him...

On 25th November 2014, a historic event happened. By the force of his inspiration 'Acharya Ramanuja', Tiru Swami decided to ascend the coveted peetam as 41st pontiff of Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Mutt, founded directly by the saint Sri-vaishnava Guru Sri Ramanujacharya himself. Hundreds of thousands of devotees thronged

the temple town of Thirunarayanapuram popularly known as Melukote's Veda Pushkarani where he attained his 'Deeksha' and entered what is called "Thuriya Ashrama" - The most sacred phase of his life. The world named him "Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar Swami".

Many of us sincerely thought that he had entered a philosophically or religiously restricted zone and that we missed the proximity of our dear global friend Tiru Swami! But to all our surprise, within a week of his becoming the Jeeyar, he instructed us to plan for "Marghali Sangeethotsava" a 5-day Carnatic classical music festival at Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Mutt.

From December 2014, he meticulously planned the three most important verticals at the Sri Mutt - religious vertical with no compromise, social vertical following the footsteps of his mentor/spiritual Guru Acharya Ramanuja and cultural vertical, a much bigger cultural revolution than his previous adhyaya at ISKCON. He has never turned back since then. On a statistical note, one can clearly say that for the last 10 years, there has been a cultural event in less than every fortnight - a feat not achieved by any Sangeetha Sabha or any cultural organisation anywhere. 10 years in succession during every one of his Chaturmasam there have been continuous cultural events for almost 30-60 days.

The world took a break for 2 full years during the treacherous COVID time during the year 2020 and 2021. But even this could not affect Sri Jeeyar Swami's passion to continue to promote the cultural programme. During this period, he became more creative and contemporary, utilised technology and organised online concerts. He introduced engaging and interesting special thematic music features called - Raaga Darshana and Vaggeya Darshana - featuring Lecture demonstrations on the Raagas by young and talented musicians, probably not done by any Sangeetha Sabhas anywhere in the World. Vaggeya Vaibhava featured the life and the compositions of eminent and saint composers of Carnatic classical music.

Come year 2022, everything was back to normal and the musical extravaganza continued at Sri Mutt with Swagatham Krishna on Jan 1st (an annual event), special concerts on Sri Narasimha Jayanthi, Sri Jayanthi, monthly Swathi Nakshatram Dolotsava, Sangeetha Seva to Lord Lakshmi Narasimha, Kuteera Sangeetha Seva and the main 5-day long Annual Marghali Sangeethotsava in December.

Year 2024 is a very special year for all of us - the shishyas and abhimaanis of our beloved Sri Sri Yathiraja Jeeyar Swami. It is the Amrutha Mahotsava, the 75th Vardhanthi/Thirunakshatram of Jeeyar Swami. The unanimous and spontaneous suggestion and appeal of the core and the programme committee was to give a very special musical tribute to Jeeyar Swami as a gratitude for the commendable service he has rendered to the musical fraternity for the last 55 years.

Starting from 1st July, we planned 75 days of cultural programmes with some major concerts from senior musicians. Popular artists like Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma, Vid. RK Padmanabha,

Vid. Dr. TS Satyavathi, Vid. Pusthakam Ramaa initiated special group programmes on special themes. Vid. Satyanarayana Raju devised a solo dance feature "Krishna Katha" a concept given by Swami himself.

Most notably, Vid. Anjali Sriram conceptualised a brilliant and fitting tribute on August 23rd through her inspiring musical ensemble aptly titled "Yathiraja Gaana Amruthavarshini". This extraordinary performance brought together an ensemble of 75 exceptionally talented musicians on a single stage at the esteemed Chowdiah Memorial Hall, under the skilled direction of Vid. Anoor Anantha Krishna Sharma. The team gifted special compositions written on Sri Jeeyar Swami by eminent scholar Shatavadhani Dr. R Ganesh, and our own Sri Mutt Scholar U. Ve. Ranga Ramanujan Swami. The icing on the cake was the renditions of two special compositions composed by Jeeyar Swami himself. This remarkable musical experience enthralled a packed auditorium of nearly 1,500 rasikas.

The 75-day Musical/Cultural extravaganza concluded on the 22nd of September with a lovely

During the musical tribute to Jeeyar Swami 'Yathiraja Gaana Amruthavarshini' on his 75th Vardhanthi Seated from L to R - CN Ashwath Narayan, MLA, Malleswaram, Smt. Vyjayanthimala Bali, Dancer, Actor and former Parliamentarian, Sri SriYadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar Swami, noted Vocalist Aswathi Thirunal Rama Varma



& scholarly concert by Vid. Anjali Sriram who happened to be the brainchild of these many programmes too.

A statistical analysis of Swami's passion for the cultural aspects revealed that there were over 1200 artists/scholars participated in these 75 days. They covered over 50 concerts, Musical features, and Dance programmes etc. No wonder one of the cultural organisations had once awarded Sri Sri Yathiraja Jeeyar Swami as "Kalashraya" and "Kala Poshaka", a true caretaker of all art forms with special reference to

Carnatic classical music. Amazingly.... he has sat through all these programmes from beginning to the end with apt attention too!!

We have only touched his passion for cultural aspects in this article being published by SRLKM. During these 75 days, he lead the other two verticals, religious and social service with no compromise!!

It is a privilege for all of us to witness this living legend, whose creative mind works 24/7 - like a factory running three shifts - to bring forth a vision dedicated to social welfare.

" Hey, are you crazy or what! "

Shylaja and Venugopal, Mysore

It is not easy to be born as the son of extraordinarily talented and world-renowned individuals. His father was none other than Pandit Taranath, who astonished an entire generation with his immense talent. He was multi-talented like Leonardo Da Vinci. His mother, Sumathi Bai, was advocating for women's rights as early as 1925 and earned the admiration of leaders like Pandit Nehru. Being born as their son leaves you with only two choices: either you disappear in the immense shadow of their identity, or you, while loving, emulating, questioning, fighting, rejecting, and appreciating them, create another vast, extraordinary identity like Trivikrama. Pandit Rajeev Taranath consciously or unconsciously chose the latter.

His entire life was a quest for excellence, and part of that quest was riyaz (practice) and the transfer of what he had found through his intellect and fingers into the minds and fingers of his students. This search for excellence in music led him to explore music in various areas with utmost seriousness. He left his indelible mark in Hindustani classical music, background scores for award-winning Kannada and Malayalam films, scoring music for film songs, teaching at the Poona Film Institute, and making music for plays of Dr. Na Ratna and 'Kuri' by MS Sathyu.

All of this began unconsciously during his childhood. My father, "Pandit Taranath, was like Leonardo da Vinci in a way - he was a tabla player, singer, freedom fighter, social reformer, and an allopathic, Ayurvedic, and Unani doctor, all in one. Perhaps he knew about his death ten years in advance, so he was eager to teach me all the knowledge he possessed before he passed away. It was a time-bound task for him. My lessons would start as soon as I opened my eyes in the morning. I had to repeat everything he taught me. Sometimes he would say, 'Puttu (little one), I will say this only once, and you must remember it immediately; otherwise, you are not my son.' There was a lot of pressure at times. My father didn't accept anything easily. Once, during a program in Bangalore where my father was the chief guest, I was asked to sing. I sang the raga Bageshree to the best of my ability, and everyone appreciated it. Even my mother was happy, but my father scolded me all the way back, saying, 'Is that how you sing, with random embellishments wherever you feel like it?' I felt very sad; I almost cried, thinking, 'Why is my father scolding me, when everyone else appreciated my performance?' But that was my father's way. However, he not only nurtured my musical taste, but also taught me to face life's difficulties with courage from a young age."



“My father was my first guru. He made me realise the importance of swara shuddhi, (pitch purity), raga bhava, and self-experience in music.” Rajeev had the opportunity to learn some ragas from Pandit Savanoor Krishnacharya, Pandit Sawai Gandharva’s first disciple Venkatarao Ramadurga, and Panchakshari Gawayi. On October 31, 1942, two hours after his father passed away, Pandit Rajeev Taranath’s music lessons began as per his father’s wish with Pandit Shankar Rao Joshi of Devagiri. This was made possible by his strong-willed mother, Sumathi Bai. These experiences shaped Rajeev Taranath’s personality during his childhood.

“I was mostly involved in singing, but apart from that, I also played the tabla, sitar, and Vichitra Veena. I had no attraction or respect for the sarod. I did not relish the staccato sound of sarod. I would create a lot of noise or leave the room whenever sarod records were played. I did not return until they were turned off. However, the greatest irony of my life is that I now live with the very sound that I used to shun!

“In my twenties, instead of falling in love or making money, I quit my job and, as if under a spell, walked to Bombay to follow the great Ustad Ali Akbar Khan. What a guru he was! He accepted this 22 year old ‘Are you mad? You’re crazy!’ and taught me right from bending my

fingers. I followed him to Calcutta like a shadow. I practiced for ten to twelve hours a day without any concern for the world. Sarod became an extension of my hands. At the Ali Akbar College of Music, I had the opportunity to watch how Annapurna Deviji taught.”

“For six years, Khan Saheb didn’t charge me a single penny for the musical nectar he poured into me. This shaped my values throughout my life. He made me realise the spiritual significance of guru, devotion, and surrender. I understood the immense debt of gratitude owed to the guru. Although I had received many lessons in English and other subjects in my life, I never considered those debts to be something I needed to repay. But Khan Saheb made me realise that learning music is different from all other forms of learning, and the relationship between the guru and the disciple in the world of music is completely unique. He opened my third eye, making me aware of this unique relationship.”

Rajeev Taranath, whom the Kannada and English literary world viewed with awe, respect, and amazement for his sharp intellect and fierce analytical skills, came to understand the unparalleled relationship between guru and disciple in music. “I understand what devotion is. But our modern thinkers don’t. If you have devotion, you will become great; otherwise, you won’t. If you

surrender to the guru, whatever he imparts will seep into you, grow, become a tree, and finally bear fruit. But you need to have that devotion. This is the main difference between learning and teaching music and learning and teaching English." This awareness made Rajeev's personality unique.

Life's unexpected twists and turns separated this guru and disciple for 22 years. Teaching English at some of the country's prestigious institutions, Taranath was eventually brought back to his rightful place by Pandit Ravi Shankar. "You learned in our gharana, didn't you? Now that swara, that style is in your hands. Have you ever thought about your responsibility? You have received something precious from us; don't you think you in return owe something?" As soon as Pandit Ravi Shankar reminded him of his unfulfilled duty, Taranath, who was in his fifties, left everything behind to embrace the sarod, dive into the ocean of music, and knock on his guru's door, saying, 'Deena Naa Bandiruve' (I, the humble one, have come). This sense of debt towards his guru remained with him throughout his life. From that moment on, he started climbing the mountain of music, as if someone had challenged him, saying, 'Can you reach greater heights?' The rest of his life was consumed by this continuous search, riyaz, and teaching.

His search was not just a random, trivial, aimless meandering in the world of music nor was he on a wild goose chase of novelty. His search was highly disciplined and continuous process. profound practice. The deeper he delved into this search, the more meaningful the music that emerged from it became. Until his last breath, he continued to set challenges for himself, find solutions, and explore the possibilities of raga and its expression on the instrument. He understood the connection with raga in the most unique and democratic way.

"I don't understand, what it means to have mastery over raga. Building a close friendship with a raga and understanding it is a process. A raga is like a person. Becoming familiar with a raga is like meeting someone for the first time and say-

ing hello, gradually becoming comfortable, and eventually opening up to each other. Only a few people become very close friends. Similarly, out of countless ragas, only a few become very intimate. They are always with me. They know me, and I know them. I can comfortably express myself with them. Although I may not be able to change their characteristics, I can play them with ease. Even when I'm not playing, they continue to wander within my mind. Exploring the extent and possibilities of a raga is a very slow, step-by-step process. It's like mountain climbing. The higher you go, the more you see. Similarly, as you gradually expand the boundaries of a raga, you begin to discover its hidden corners, unfamiliar areas you've never seen before. If you have some patience, you can take the raga along with you. With a little more patience, the raga will start communicating with you. Our Khan Sahab used to explain how to develop a raga like a Zen master: 'If you start walking on the path of raga, the path itself will show you the way.'"

"But you must have the desire to achieve more. To achieve, you need riyaz. All the thoughts that come and go in my mind should be possible for my hands to execute. My ideas should come to my fingers, and my fingers should become my ideas. The more you achieve, the more your imagination expand and grow because our ideas are always limited by our ability to play or sing. That's why we practice. As you learn and achieve more, your fingers gain more skill, capability, and dexterity. The possibilities for your fingers increase. As your capability grows, so do your ideas. The more you progress towards excellence, the more you begin to see. This creates a craving to see even more. There's no end to it. This process itself brings immense satisfaction and a sense of completeness. We all aspire to this excellence. Kalidasa, Shakespeare-they all desired this excellence, not just individuality."

"This practice, or riyaz, is a deeply personal moment for every musician and every student of music. It is during practice that they patiently and lovingly smooth out every wrinkle, refining their skills, capabilities, and techniques until they

shine. Riyaz is the process of setting up self-imposed challenges and successfully overcoming them, one by one. It is an endless journey, a space where we explore our creative possibilities. It is where ideas and imagination are polished to perfection. Over time, riyaz expands an artist's imagination, spreading like a small butter pat over a large piece of bread, never overwhelming but covering every part evenly. We set out to create something new, and sometimes we succeed, while other times, just as we think we've grasped it, it slips away. But isn't there so much joy in that very effort?" His unique mindset celebrated the process itself rather than just the outcome.

As his disciple Sachin Hampe puts it, "this mindset allowed him to take the music that his guru, Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, had stopped playing 20 years earlier further and develop it. Through relentless practice, contemplation, and a tireless search for musical and personal identity, he introduced new dimensions to that music and nurtured it. While his body aged, his mind and thoughts remained far ahead, more advanced and modern than those of his contemporaries and even the current generation of sarod players. For the past twelve years, I observed that every morning he would begin his riyaz with the rag Natabhairav. In these twelve years, I never felt like I was hearing the same Natabhairav. Every day, he would set a new challenge and work through it, which took him to great heights. This profound approach created a deep chasm between him and the rest of his lineage and the tradition he left behind.

With the same intensity, he explored the possibilities of music in the celluloid world. The music he composed for the film *Samskara* opened a new chapter in the background music of Kannada cinema. Additionally, while composing for Lankesh's *Pallavi* and Khandavideko Mam-savideko, he attempted to break established frames to create something new. The raga-based song "*Bantido Shrungara Masa*," composed for the film *Shrungara Masa* with Bendre's lyrics, became an all-time classic. Similarly, his work in the Malayalam films *Kanchana Sita* and *Pokku*

veyil also won awards. Rajeev Taranath's concern was that music had been repeated over and over, making it feel necessary to offer the same thing again and again to the audience. We must take responsibility to stimulate the audience's tastes by presenting something new. His admiration for A.R. Rahman was immense. He considered Rahman to be an extraordinary music director, having grown up among musical instruments in the studio. "While we might know the possibilities of one instrument, Rahman knows the possibilities of all instruments - he is a genius."

Rajeev Taranath was never someone who settled for "good enough." He sought perfection in everything he did. As Na. Ratna often emphasised, "Once, when we were doing the play 'Raktakshi' in Mysore, there was a scene where a ghost appears. We made a slide for it, and Rajeev sat with us for hours composing the background music. He used all sorts of sounds-like the sound of a plate falling or the squeaking of a revolving chair - to create the ghostly effect. His music was incredibly effective. Despite being such a great musician, he took immense care while composing small pieces for us, who were just amateurs. I was touched by this commitment. Theatre person Raghunandan always used to tell that the music he composed for MS Sathyu's play *Kuri* was extraordinary. Whatever he did, it had to be perfect, it had to be excellent, and it had to have a certain maturity.

These qualities shaped both his teaching and his role as a guru. He never charged any of his students a fee. Even a month before his passing, he was teaching online to students in America, Japan, and Australia. His disciple, Anupam Joshi had come from Pune, to be with him while was hospitalised. He had asked Anupam to bring his sarod. While lying on the hospital bed, he sang and asked Anupam to play the same on the sarod. Teaching was a passion for him; it had no fixed time. Sachin Hampe, a student who studied with him for twelve years, recalls, "If he felt inspired at three in the morning, he would wake me up. That entire process was filled with friendship, love, anger, and appreciation. When I

listen to recordings from the early years of my training, I find more scolding than lessons. During the later years after I finished playing, he would add something different and creative to the raga, revealing its unexplored possibilities. My lesson was never complete without such an addition.” His senior disciple Sohan Neelkanth shares another facet of his teaching: ‘One day at three in the morning, I felt that someone was calling me. When I opened my eyes, there was Guruji standing with a cup of tea. I was startled and tried to say something, but he said, ‘Don’t talk, don’t disturb the silence. Drink your tea and take your sarod.’ He then taught me the rag Lalit, saying, ‘This silence is the perfect time to learn such a beautiful rag. Whether the tea is made by the guru or the disciple, how does it matter at a time like this?’ and continued the lesson.’”

Usually, musicians prefer to practice alone, not allowing anyone to be present. But our guru would let us in, while he practiced. We would see him make mistakes and correct them, giving us the opportunity to observe and learn from his journey towards perfection. We could understand and adopt how he surpassed his limits. Sachin fondly remembers, “Taranath believed

that music should be taught personally, which is why he never took much pleasure in teaching at universities.”

For him, music and life were never separate. He taught his students not just music but also various life skills, including cooking. He would share recipes for dishes like dal, tomato upma, and eggplant curry with his American student Leslie Snyder, his senior disciple Sohan Neelkanth from Ahmedabad, and even those of us who were not his music students. While serving Ustad Alla Rakha, whom he considered a mentor he had learnt the subtle nuances of tabla playing, and also a number of dishes.

Rajeev Taranath has left behind various voids and chasms in the lives of many. His students may never find another guru who can carry forward the music of Khan Saheb as he did. For his loved ones, there is no one left to confide in, no close friend. For those seeking knowledge, the treasure trove is no more. He was a person who made us marvel at his very existence. Statements like “Go on, your guru is waiting for you,” now feels like a cliché.

Subbaraya Sastri and Annaswami Sastri

TS Vasudevan

(Courtesy ‘Saraswathi Vaggeyakara Trust’, Chennai)

Subbaraya Sastri was the younger son of Shyama Sastri and born under nakshatra - Krithika, the star of Lord Subrahmanya. So he used the mudra 'Kumara' in his compositions. He was a disciple of Thyagaraja and became a reputed violinist. He evolved a style of his own, combining the beautiful aspects of the musical Trinity. The swara - sahityas in his kritis are exquisite miniatures of his father's swarajathis. We have only 12 of his kritis. 'Sankari nive amba' (Begada), 'Janani ninnu vina' (Ritigowla), 'Venkatasaila Shaila vihara' (Hamir Kalyani) and 'Ninuvina gati gana' (Kalyani) are his popular compositions.

Subbaraya Sastri had no issue. He adopted his nephew, Annaswami Sastri, the third son of his elder brother. Annaswami Sastri was a scholar in Sanskrit and also an accomplished violinist. He composed one Adi tala varna in Todi ('Karunakatakshi nannu') and a Kambhoji varna in Ata tala ('Ninne koriyunnanura'), two darus in Kedaragaula ('Kaminchiyunnadira') and Yadukulambhoji and six kritis. 'Inkevarunnaru nannu' (Sahana) and 'Parama pavani' (Attana) are his popular kritis. He rendered valuable service to music by writing arohana and avarohana of more than thousand ragas.



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Vid. G.V. Krishna Prasad



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2nd February 2025, Sunday	Trichur Brothers - Srikrishna Mohan and Ramkumar Mohan (Vocal Duet), Sayee Rakshith (Violin), Praveen Sparsh (Mridanga), Chandrasekara Sharma (Ghata)
3rd February 2025, Monday	Aishwarya Vidya Raghunath (Vocal), RK Shriramkumar (Violin), KU Jayachandra Rao (Mridanga), N Guruprasad (Ghata)
4th February 2025, Tuesday	Amit Nadig (Flute), BC Manjunath (Mridanga), Vid. G. Guruprasanna (Khanjira), BR Somashekar Jois (Konnakol)
5th February 2025, Wednesday	Bangalore Brothers - MB Hariharan and S Ashok (Vocal Duet), Mysore V Srikanth (Violin), Tumkur B Ravishankar (Mridanga), Vyasa Vittala (Khanjira)
6th February 2025, Thursday	Musical discourse on "Karnataka Haridasas" Vishakha Hari (Vocal/ Harikatha), Mattur Srinidhi (Violin), Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma (Mridanga), Sukanya Ramgopal (Ghata)
07th February 2025, Friday	Ramakrishnan Murthy (Vocal), L Ramakrishnan (Violin), Delhi Sairam (Mridanga), Giridhar Udupa (Ghata)
08th February 2025, Saturday	Anahita and Apoorva (Vocal Duet), Charulatha Ramanujam (Violin), HS Sudhindra (Mridanga), Omkar Rao (Ghata)
09th February 2025, Sunday	Jayanthi Kumaresh (Veena), KU Jayachandra Rao (Mridanga), Giridhar Udupa (Ghata)

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