

*Powai Fine Arts*



2010 - 2020

*Commemorative Souvenir*

January 04, 2020

# President's Message



**Dr. G. Ramakrishnan**

It is indeed very heartening to see that Powai Fine Arts is completing 10 years of its service in the fields of music, dance and drama and community service especially for the people of the suburbs of Powai and Chandivali. A mega event of dance and music has been organized on January 4-5, 2020 to celebrate this achievement at the Olympia Lawns of Hiranandani Gardens, Powai, Mumbai - 400 076

Reputed Veena artists, Iyer Brothers from Australia, well known Carnatic musician Smt. Gayathri Vankataraghavan, famous music performers and TV presenters, Dr. Sriram Parasuram and Smt. Anuradha Sriram and the enviable Bharathanatyam troupe of Sri Parswanath Upadhyay will be performing on these days, which makes this event very unique in every way.

Powai Fine Arts was established as a not-for-profit organization in January 2010 by a few enthusiasts, interested in promoting music, dance and drama among the residents of Powai and Chandivali areas, by bringing in talents from within Mumbai and outside. The past 10 years have been very successful and a good number of classical music programs in both Carnatic classical and Hindustani styles have been presented. Various instrumental performances such as veena, violin, flute, santoor and percussion instruments have also been presented. Exponents of various forms of dances such as, Bharathanatyam, Kuchipudi, Mohiniyattam, Kathak and Odissi have also been performed under the banner of Powai Fine Arts. Popular Hindi Songs by different well-known local groups have been presented on a few occasions during the last ten years besides a couple of famous dramas. Overall PFA has brought more than 100 artists to provide the desired entertainment to people of this region, who otherwise would have to travel to faraway places to enjoy such programs.

For the past couple of years, PFA has been conducting a Music & Dance School for the benefit of students living in the Powai and Chandivali areas thus saving their journey to faraway suburbs such as Mulund and Ghatkoper. Presently the classes are offered by competent teachers for Carnatic and Hindustani vocal, Devotional Songs and Bhajans, Bharathanatyam, Mridangam, Veena and Violin.

As we journey through our second decade, we are determined to continue with the above and concentrate on hosting even more unique programs such as Composers Day and conducting music and dance competitions regularly. We intend to showcase our own Music and Dance School students to exhibit their talents during our PFA Members' Day Program. We also hope to recognize the academic excellence of students of our members at a yearly function.

The journey during the past 10 years has been possible only through the dedicated service of the Management Committee Members and they deserve all the recognition for the success of PFA so also for the encouragement given by the Corporate Members and Life members; I humbly salute them on this occasion. The life ahead is going to be tough especially in getting the required funds for our activities; In this regard we want to thank our past and present sponsors, donors and advertisers and we request them to continue to support us so that we can spread our fine arts culture and community services to the suburbs of Powai and Chandivali. We hope to host some medical camps also with support from some doctors, banks and companies that are willing to help us in such community welfare programs. I wish to thank all those who have helped us in the past in one way or another and request one and all to support us in every way possible so that we come out with flying colors in our next leg of our journey.

We hope that everyone attending the events over the next two days will find it very interesting and enjoyable. I wish you and your family a very happy, healthy and prosperous new year.

Dr.G.Ramakrishnan has been the Founder President of Powai Fine Arts in January 2010. He is very passionate about music and dance and is a composer and singer of devotional music and bhajans. He has his personal website [www.bhakthigitanjali.com](http://www.bhakthigitanjali.com), where he has hosted all his songs with lyrics for the convenience of those interested. He did his M.Sc. in Organic Chemistry from SIES College and Ph.D. from BARC. He was a postdoctoral associate at Florida State University and Brown University, USA for a few years and has served as Asia-Pacific Manager of Hewlett-Packard in Singapore, Vice President of Agilent Technologies India, and Managing Director of Thermo Fisher Scientific., India. He was till recently the Honorary Director of SIES Institute of Chromatography and Spectroscopy and currently the President of Chromatographic Society of India.

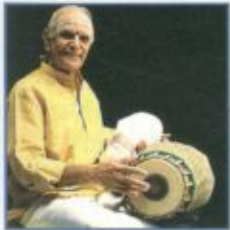
# About Powai Fine Arts:

*Powai Fine Arts* is a Not-for-Profit organization established in January 2010 by a few enthusiasts, interested in promoting music, dance and drama among the residents of Powai and Chandvali area, by bringing in talents both from within Mumbai and outside

The past ten years have been successful beyond our expectations and a good number of classical music programs both Carnatic and Hindustani styles have been presented, so also the various instrumental performances such as Veena, Violin, Flute, Santoor, percussion, etc. Exponents of Various forms of dance such as Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, Mohiniyattam, Kathak and Odissi have also performed for Powai Fine Arts. We have also provided a stage for popular old Hindi songs by different groups of people a few times. A couple of reputed drama groups have also performed for PFA in the past. Overall, PFA would have brought more than 100 artists to this suburb of Mumbai thus providing the desired entertainment to people, who would not have been able to travel to other parts of Mumbai for such programs.

For the last couple of years, PFA has started a Music and Dance School for the benefit of students living in the Powai and Chandivali areas thus saving their journey to faraway places such as Mulund and Ghatkoper. Presently the classes are offered for Carnatic and Hindustani vocal, bharatanatyam, mridangam, veena and Violin. PFA has conducted health awareness program and free medical check up for the benefit of Powai and Chandivali residents as part of the ISR program. PFA members have also taken part in the 'Powai Run' for a public cause.

PFA is very pleased that as part of the 10 year celebrations, the following eminent artists have agreed to be our Honorary Patrons and provide us guidance as we embark on our journey into our second decade.



**Dr. Umayalpuram K. Sivaraman:** Mridangam Maestro Umayalpuram K. Sivaraman has received from the Government of India, The Padmasri, Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan Honors and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award. He is also recipient of the Sangeetha Kalanidhi Award from Madras Music Academy among several others. PFA also proudly honored him with a Lifetime Achievement award

**Guru K. Kalyanasundaram Pillai:** Guru K. Kalyanasundaram Pillai, Director of the dance school in Mumbai, Sri Raja Rajeshwari Kala Mandir, is the recipient of Sangeet Natak Akademi Award from Government of India. He is also the recipient of the Kalaimamani Award from the Tamil Nadu government among several others. PFA also proudly honored him with a Lifetime Achievement award.



**Dr. N. Rajam:** Dr. N. Rajam, internationally reputed violin maestro, is the recipient of Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan from the Government of India so also the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award. She is also recipient of the Pune Pandit award instituted by The Art & Music Foundation, Pune. PFA is grateful to Dr. N. Rajam for inaugurating Powai Fine Arts in January, 2010.

**Smt. Kalyani Sharma:** Smt Kalyani Sharma, ex-Joint Director of Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya Mumbai, is a Vainika-Gayaki and an artiste-guru of great merit. Disciple of renowned maestros Sri Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer and Sri K.S. Narayanaswamy in vocal and veena respectively. She has been bestowed with several awards including the Sangeetha Kala Acharya award from Music Academy Chennai, Sri Mahaswamy Puraskar from Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham and Shanmukha Ratna from Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha and Lifetime Achievement Award from Powai Fine Arts.



**Smt. Alamelu Mani:** Smt. Alamelu Mani is a reputed carnatic vocalist and a teacher par excellence. She is disciple of legendary Gurus such as Sri. HAS Mani, Smt. T. Brinda and Smt. T. Muktha. She has performed in many cities in India and several foreign countries and has taught more than 1500 students. She has received several recognition and awards and among them are, T. Brinda Memorial Award presented at at the Cleaveland Thyagaraja Festival, Sangeetha Kala Acharya award from Music Academy, Chennai and Sangeet Natak Akademi award from Government of India.



**Shanthi Swaminathan**

Dear All,

Happy New Year!

Powai Fine Arts (PFA) turns eleven this year and what a journey it has been! As we work in the future to nurture and develop Powai into a centre of cultural excellence, I cannot help but look back at the challenges and triumphs we have had as Powai Fine Arts over the last decade.

Rather than striving to get everything just right, we strive to excel in our own way. We had the privilege of hosting music and dance concerts, lecture demonstrations by Vidwans and Vidhushis of legends as well as the vanguards. This list includes Padma Vibhushan awardee and Sangita Kalanidhi Dr. Umayalpuram K.Sivaraman, Sangita Kalanidhi Shri. T.V. Sankaranarayanan, Sangita Kalanidhi Dr. S. Sowmya, Pt. Ajay Pohankar, Pt. Satish Vyas as well as Shri Sikkil Gurucharan, Shri.Sandeep Narayan, Shri Vignesh Ishwar, etc. We had the opportunity to present various Classical dance forms from Bharathanatyam to Odissi & Manipuri by renowned dancers. The articles and the photographs in our Souvenir will stand as proof, speaking volumes about our endeavour and commitment.

This is all made possible because of the tireless efforts and enthusiasm of the Trustees, Office Bearers and the Management Committee Members, both past and present. Their passion and dedication have been a driving force to overcome challenges and move ahead in the right direction. The support of our Sponsors, Life Members and Corporate Members and Media have always been stupendous. Their involvement and enthusiastic participation are deeply appreciated. We earnestly hope that their support will always be with us.

Our Thyagaraja Aradhana is once again an affirmation exhibited by the enthusiastic participation of both Artists and Rasikas. The extraordinary connection between PFA and the artists, Sponsors, Life and Corporate Members and the Rasikas is what provides us with encouragement and supports us to achieve our vision and mission.

A special thanks to Nahar School Management for providing us with the Auditorium for Concerts and Classrooms for our Music and Dance Classes. We also wish to thank and congratulate the Souvenir Contributors for the excellent articles and messages. We appreciate the effort, time spent on painstaking research, and their deep knowledge on the subject they wrote upon. The articles especially on various dance margams add more essence

It is our goal to celebrate and spread the richness of Classical Music and other Indian art-forms among the younger generation. Our 'Music and Dance Classes' is a step forward towards this goal. We firmly believe that the pursuit of excellence is a continuous process and as we enjoy this pursuit, we will continue to strive in this process always. We have seen our first decade pass by successfully. This only means there are many many more successful decades to come by the grace of God.

Thank You all for the support, energy and encouragement.

**Shanthi Swaminathan**  
Honorary Secretary  
Powai Fine Arts

# PFA Governing Council

## Board of Trustees :

**Dr. G. Ramakrishnan**  
**Dr. Ranjini Krishnaswamy**  
**Mr. Ramesh Ramakrishnan**

**Mr. D.Thyagarajan**

**Mr. Shyam Saksena**  
**Dr. Suhas Sukhatme**  
**Mr. B. Ramakrishnan**

## Management Committee:



**Dr. G. Ramakrishnan**  
President



**Mr. Suresh Ramani**  
Vice President



**Ms. Shanthi Swaminathan**  
Honorary Secretary



**Mr. Ramesh Ramkrishnan**  
Honorary Treasurer



**Mr. B. Swaminathan**  
Executive Member



**Dr. Ranjini Krishnaswamy**  
Executive Member



**Dr. Suman Badami**  
Executive Member



**Dr. Sailaja Desai**  
Executive Member



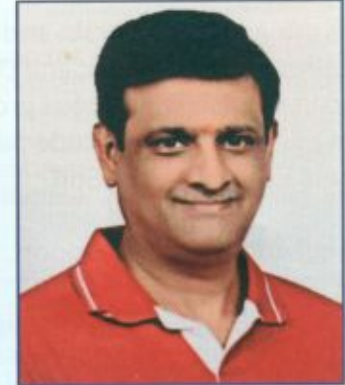
**Dr. G. Sivakumar**  
Executive Member



**Ms. Vidya Kidambi**  
Executive Member



**Mr. Kumar Nagarajan**  
Executive Member



**Mr. Ganesh Iyer**  
Executive Member

*Celebration* **10** YEARS *Committee*



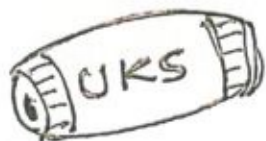
Sitting L to R: Dr. Suman Badami, Dr. G. Ramakrishnan, Mr. Suresh Ramani  
Standing L to R: Ms. Shanthi Swaminathan, Mr. Ramesh Ramkrishnan, Dr. Sailaja Desai

9/12/2019

The President &  
The Hony. Secretary,  
Powai Fine arts,  
Powai, Mumbai-76.

I am very much delighted to know that Powai Fine arts completes ten years of yeoman service for the promotion and propagation of our divine music in Mumbai. To run an organization of this nature with high ideals is something worthy of emulation by other institutions.

The music fraternity, inclusive of myself, sends our warmest congratulations to this wonderful Sabha and wishes this Sabha continuous services for long long years and sends our best wishes to all the members and the governing body.



With warm  
wishes,  
DR. UMAYALPURAM  
K. SIVARAMAN

# Powai Fine Arts Music & Dance Classes

## Suman Badami

While bringing in the best professional performers to Powai and making this a unique cultural hub to the art lovers in and around Powai, it was felt that it was time to get started with our mission of reaching out to the residents here in learning and understanding our art forms. It was a natural extension to get into training students to learn our classical arts, to encourage budding talent, to make it easier for people in this area to have access to high quality training.

PFA has gained a great reputation in its past 10 years, in the way the programs are curated and conducted and we enjoy a wonderful rapport with the leading artists of Mumbai, who were more than willing to pitch in with training sessions.

Space is always a problem in Mumbai and it was a wonderful coincidence that Nahar International School, impressed by the quality of our programs held at their auditorium during the past few years, requested that we start a music and dance wing.

And so, in September 2017 on the auspicious day of Vijaya Dashami, with the blessings of the renowned Guru Smt. Kalyani Sharma, PFA Music and Dance Classes was launched. It was decided to have: Mridangam by Mumbai Shri Shankaranarayanan, Carnatic vocal beginners as well as advanced batch taught by the experienced teachers, Smt. Hemamalini Arunkumar and Smt. Sunitha Ganesh, Hindustani Vocal by Guru Anagha Hindlekar, Violin by Guru Smt Vanamala Dikshit and Bharatanatyam in affiliation with Nalanda Dance Research Centre.

PFA Music and Dance wing also coordinated Kathak classes for the primary school at Nahar International as a co-curriculum activity during the regular working hours for one semester. These were taught by senior students of Guru Ranjana Phadke.

On August 15th 2018 and on the Family Day at Nahar International, students and faculty of PFA Music and Dance Classes performed for the parents and students of Nahar International School. The Mridangam students performed at the Annual Day of Guru Shri Shankaranarayanan's academy at Fine Arts Society Chembur.

During this period between April 2018 to March 2019, the academy added one more batch of Mridangam, Violin, Carnatic classes for the beginners. Veena classes were also introduced with experienced Vainika Smt Usha Thyagarajan as the Guru.

Guru Poornima Celebrations were conducted during these two years in a grand way by the students of our Mridangam and Hindustani classes with the students getting a platform to perform due to this initiative by their respective Gurus.

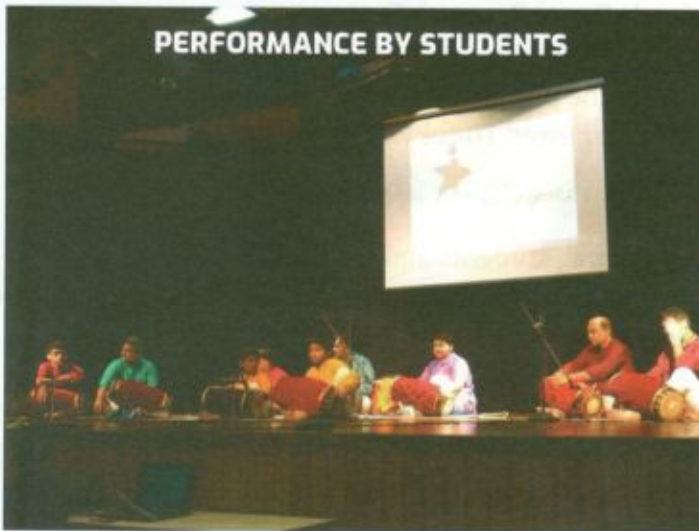
Bharatanatyam students took their 1st year and 2nd year exams and all students passed with excellent scores. The exams were conducted by Nalanda Dance Centre Juhu with whom the course is affiliated and certificates were awarded to all the students.



Two excellent workshops were conducted by our academy in 2018:

- (a) Raaga, the Actual Big Bang Theory by Sri Narayan Parasuram introducing the young students to some interesting facets of music.
- (b) A Fun way to Learn Rhythms workshop conducted by Mumbai Sri. Shankaranarayanan

Vijayadashami celebrations were held on October 19th 2018 and October 8th 2019 and students got to perform in front of members and other students and families on that day. Looking ahead we hope to have more students enrolling in each batch and also have more workshops and seminars in addition to the regular classes.



**Dr. Smt Suman Badami** is a Bharatanatyam dancer and teacher from Mumbai. She has performed at several prestigious venues in India and abroad and is trained in the Vazhuvoor bani under Kalaimamani Sri. S K Kameswaran and Smt. Saroja Kameswaran, Chennai. She has a Ph.D. in Aesthetics of classical Indian dance and a Fellowship from the Ministry of Culture for research in Bharatanatyam. She teaches Bharatanatyam at her centre Natya Vimarsha in Powai, Mumbai.

# Brahmasri Papanasam Sivan

## Papanasam Ashok Ramani



I am extremely delighted to contribute to the 10th anniversary of Powai Fine Arts and write about my grand-father, the legendary Brahma Sri. Papanasam Sivan, the most prolific composer cum performer that the Carnatic music world has seen, post the musical Trinity's times.

Today's Tamil Nadu has produced several doyens in the field of Carnatic Music, since the dawn of the 18th century, starting with the Trinity, most of whom have left behind rich legacies by way of immortal compositions and an impressive lineage of disciples. The dawn of 20th century brought so many great souls to the freedom seeking, culturally vibrant nation of India. There were many shining stars in every facet of society throughout the nation, especially in Southern province of

under British Rule. The Classical music world brought in the greats such as Uthukadu Venkatakavi, Muthiah Bhagavata, Mahavaidyanatha Sivan, Neelakanta Sivan and Sri Papanasam Sivan. Madras Residency, It will not be an exaggeration to state that Sri Sivan made a transformational change in the field of Carnatic music in the sense, that his spontaneous compositions had a wide range – from Varnam to Mangalam and included padams and jaavalis mainly used in classical dance forms. Rarely has any other composer laid out such a comprehensive menu for the musicians. He was born about half a century after Thyagabrahmam passed away and was rightly titled as "Tamizh Thyagayya" by the musical aficionados.

All of his well structured compositions are soaked in simple and pure devotional content and high musical value. His connect to his Almighty was unique and sublime. He has described God's beauty, extolled His virtues, pleaded to God with absolute Bhakthi, has demanded God's grace with liberty, has chided God for not alleviating his miseries and has even made fun of God for being busy without paying attention to his devotees.

"Kana Kannkodivendum" in Kambodi, "Thaye" in Bhairavi, "ChithamIrangathenaiya" in Sahana, "EnaduManam" in Harikhamboji, "Mathainnumvadha" in Sri Ranjani, "Pichaikkuvandeero" in Surutti are some of the sterling examples of the above facets expressed in his compositions.

Though from the 16th century onwards, we have had Tamil compositions of Tamil Trinity, Gopalakrishna Bharathi and a host of small time Vagyeyakaras, it is Shri Sivan who has produced a volume of compositions almost equal to Tyagaraja and Muthuswami Dikshitar. Just as Italian was considered the most suitable language for western classical and operatic music, Telugu language, more particularly, the devotion filled compositions of Tyagaraja dominated the concert platforms of South India. With the arrival of Sivan's compositions, musicians could not resist singing his simple yet very elegantly structured Tamil compositions with rich emotive content, in the concert platforms, as they ensured instant connect with the only Tamil knowing but keen Carnatic rasikas. Even though the rhetoric that Music has no language was feebly articulated at all times, it has always been a fact that an average Carnatic music rasika who did not understand Sanskrit or Telugu could really not fathom what the composers like Thyagayya or Dikshitar were conveying and had to contend with enjoying the beauty of the raga or the talents of the musicians when they traversed the nuances with their brigas or alaaps. Sri Sivan's compositions came as a big relief to them and gave a great fillip to the Tamizh Isai movement.

Though he is known for his major contribution to Tamil repertoire of songs for concert platforms, Shri Sivan had mastery over Sanskrit as well, and has composed over 60 Sanskrit songs. He had obtained "Upaadhyaayaa" and "Vaiyaakarani" titles from Maharaja College of Sanskrit in Trivandrum. As Shri Sivan was multi-faceted in every way, Tamil film world eagerly embraced him. He not only composed the songs but also set music for several films. Many of his compositions could easily pass off as compositions worthy enough to be sung in concert platforms.

He also set music, sang them himself and also acted in a few films. I am told that during Sivan's days, even ordinary people like labourers in docks and rickshaw pullers who had no exposure to classical music used to hum the classical tunes of the songs composed by Sri Sivan. He ably acted in films along with super star of those days M K Thyagaraja Bhagavathar. Recognizing his immense talent Smt. Rukmani Arundale, the founder of Kalakshetra brought him to teach music in her institution. She herself was his ardent student. Sri Sivan's days in Kalakshetra were immensely satisfying to him and I am told that, his admiration for Smt Rukmini Arundale prompted him to name his daughter Rukmini. It is not his fortune but that of all of us- the music lovers, that Sri Sivan's talent was rightly recognised at the right time by people who mattered. The list included Smt Rukmini Arundale of Kalakshetra, the legendary film director and father of the famous dance guru Padma Subramaniam, Dr K. Subrahmanyam, the famous film producer Sri S.S. Vasan, Kalki Krishnamurthy, Sri. Sadasivam, his wife and the Bharat Ratna recipient Smt. M.S. Subbulakshmi, Sri M G Ramachandran, former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and several others.

Sri Sivan was a downright simple man and had his musical origins in the traditional Bhajansampradaya. For about 40 years, he was leading the Bhajan team during the Thiruvayyaru Saphthasthaana Utsavam, walking 18 miles around 7 villages and filled the ears of many with his divine music. And then, who can forget that Sri Sivan, year after year, during the wintery Margazhi, used to lead the Bhajans with his disciples and several bhaktas in the wee hours, around the four Mada Streets of Mylapore – yes, the very place we are today gathered in, unmindful of the chilly weather – for several decades? Long time Mylapore residents fondly recall that several front ranking artists of those days like Prof Ramanathan and D.K. Jayaraman used to accompany him in those street bhajans. Many popular artists like Sanjay Subrahmanyam, Vijay Siva, Ashok Ramani, Sowmya, Neyveli Santhana Gopalan, Gayathri Venkataraghavan, Trivandrum Baby and many others were the great followers of Sivan bhajan for over 25-years.

Awards and rewards do not matter to great souls like Sri Sivan. However, the titles and awards from the Music Academy and Sangeet Natak Academy and the Govt. of India's Padma Bhushan added to his glory. The most venerated pontiff of Kanchi Mutt His Holiness Paramacharya blessed him with the title 'Sangeetha Sahithya Kala Sikhamani', at his 60th birthday celebrations which he held as very dear to him.

Sri Sivan was also a great patriot. He had great love and respect for Sri Subramania Bharathi. The song Pamalaiklunai Undo is a manifestation of this. Sri Sivan was close to national leaders like Satyamurthi, Sri. Sreenivasa Iyengar and Sri Kasturi Renga Iyengar. He composed several patriotic songs that were used in movies like Thyaga Bhoomi. The song "Desasevaiseyyavareer" evocatively sung by the doyen Smt D. K. Pattammal became extremely popular. Another song "Bharathanannaadu" was also sung by Smt.D.K. Pattammal, who rated it as comparable to any song of Subramania Bharathi.

Though Sri.Sivan did not have many direct disciples doing 'gurukulavasam' under him, musical wizards like Madurai Mani Iyer, Dandapanidesikar, Musiri Subramania Iyer, Dr.Ramanathan, Lalgudi Jayaraman, D.K. Jayaraman, M.S.Subbulakshmi and D.K. Patammal learned music at one time or the other under this great master. Apart from these, Sri Mani and Sri Sethalapathi Balu were also his ardent sishyas, not to forget Smt Rukmini Ramani, his daughter and the proud torch bearer of Sri Sivan's tradition and a veritable composer herself and the carnatic vocalist and grandson Ashok Ramani.

Carnatic Music is one of the richest traditional wealths of this nation and Sri Papanasam Sivan's name is permanently etched in that cultural lineage. As all of us are aware, Chennai is the world capital for Carnatic Music but it is Sri Sivan, who with his plethora of Tamil compositions ensured a deeper connect among the Tamil music rasikas, with his Tamil compositions, laden with musical beauty, emotive content, religious fervour and use of simple but elegant expressions that are understandable even to the common man.

With these few words and my sincere felicitations to the organisers of Powai Fine Arts. I offer my humble salutations to that great Mahan Sri Papanasam Sivan and my best wishes for the success of PFA for many years to come..



**Ashok Ramani**, born on April 10, 1964, commenced music training at a very young age with my mother Dr.Rukmini Ramani (daughter of Papanasam Sivan). Subsequently was under the tutelage of Dr.S.Ramanathan. Learnt from Calcutta K.S.Krishnamurthy & Bombay Ramachandran. A disciple of Palghat K.V.Narayanaswamy for over 17 years. Presently learning from Vidwan Sri. P. S. Narayanaswamy.

# Harikesanallur Muthia Bhagavathar

## Smt. Swarna Subramaniam

(Excerpts taken from the book by Mr. Vaidyanathan)

Harikesanallur Muthia Bhagavathar, was born in the year 1877, November 15, to Lingam Iyer and Anandavalli Ammal in the Punelveli village near Rajapalayam. He lost his father at the age of 7 and was brought up under the care and attention of his maternal uncle Mahamahopadhyaya Lakshmana Suri in Harikesanallur, Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu. At the age of 9, he went to Tiruvayaru and learnt music under the great violin Legend Sambasiva Iyer. He also learnt Sanskrit, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam side by side. He learnt Vedas also in Tiruvayaru. At the age of 19, he completed all his studies and came back to Harikesanallur;



Later, he went to Thiruvanathapuram and performed at a concert in front of Maharaja Moolam Thirunal Maharaja so stunningly, that he was honored with cash and gold. At the age of 22, he married Sivakami Ammal. He had a sister named Kanthimathi and a brother named Hariharan. At the age of 24 he gave a wonderful performance at Andipatti and was honored by the Zamindar Pethachi Chettiar. He was well known for Harikatha Kalashepam also. He learnt Marathi and introduced new techniques like saakhi and dhindhi in his Harikatha. His famous Harikathas are Valli kalyanam, Sathi sulochana, Kausalya kalyanam, Durvasa bhikshai, Draupadi maana samrakshanam, Tyagaraja charithram etc. In 1927 he performed before the Maharaja of Mysore, and the Maharaja appointed him as the Asthana Vidwan of his samasthanam. At the request of the

Mysore Maharaja, Muthiah Baghavathar composed 108 Chamundeswari Ashtothra krithis and 108 Siva Ashtothra krithis. Apart from this he composed Adi Thala and Ata Thala Varnas, Dharuvarnam, Navavarnam, Ragamalika and Navagruha krithis. He has composed verses on almost all the deities. The unique feature is that he has composed in 4 languages, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Sanskrit. Mysore Maharaja was very much impressed by his Chamundeswari Ashtothra krithis, so he conferred on him the title of "Gayakashikamani". In 1932 he became the principal of Madras Music Academy and the Academy conferred on him the "Sangitha Kalanidhi" title.

In 1936 he was invited by Swati Tirunal Maharaja of Thiruvanathapuram and the maharaja made him Asthana Vidwan of his palace. Maharaja established the Swati Tirunal Music college and appointed Muthiah Bagaavathar as principal for that college. In 1939 he adopted his brothers son, Vaidyalingam as sweekara puthran.

In 1941 Baghavathar wrote a book titled "Sangitha Kalpathrumam" for which Trivandrum University offered him doctorate degree. In 1943 he again went back to Mysore and the Maharaja honoured him again. The most interesting part of his musical achievements were that he invented 24 ragas, Vijaya Saraswathi, Hamsagamani, Karnaranjini, Pasupathi Priya, Budhamanohari, Sumanapriya, Guharanjini, Hamsa Deepikam, Gokilabashini, Alankari Valaji, Saranga Malhar, Gowda Malhar, Niroshtha, Hamsanandhi, Mayapradeepam, Harinarayani, Nagabhushini, Veenabheri, Chakrapradeepam, Vijaya Nagari, Chakrapradeeptha, Urmika and Guru Priya are some of the names.

He has to his credit almost 400 musical compositions, the largest among the post-Trinity composers that included many different types of Varnams as well as Kritis and Thillanas. The songs were on a number of the Hindu pantheon, his patrons. He also popularized Shanmukhapriya and Mohanakalyani. When someone asked if he could compose something that would appeal to Westerners, he composed the English Notes, later popularised by Madurai Mani Iyer, that was played on nagaswaram in the famous Tamil film 'Thillana Mohanambal'.

In 1934, Muthiah Bhagavathar composed music for Tamil Nadu Talkies then owned by S. Soundararaja for their Lavakusa, a film based on the Uttara Ramayana. Bhagavathar initially was very reluctant but was later persuaded by Raval Krishna Iyer, a budding contractor of Madras. Later, Muthiah Bhagavathar travelled to Bombay where the film was being made at the Ranjit Studios. He composed 63 songs for the film resulting in the film being renamed as Sangeetha Lavakusa.

He was adept at playing both the Chitraveena and Mridangam. In addition to musical talents, his theoretical knowledge was also vast. He wrote a treatise on musical theory, Sangita Kalpa Drumam, and regularly gave lectures on musicology at the Music Academy. He was also the first principal of the Swati Thirunal Academy of music started in Trivandrum in 1939. Muthiah Bhagavathar has also authored a Sanskrit poetic work called Tyagaraja Vijaya Kavya. T. N. Seshagopalan, who was taught by Ramanathapuram Sankara Sivam, a disciple of Muthiah Bhagavathar, said "He was also the first to introduce the practice of nagaswara vidwans playing during the puja time at the Thiruvananthapuram temple."

He lived like a king, but was as magnanimous as he was rich. The Harikesanjali Trust (promoted by his descendants) has been established to propagate his compositions. Having impressed the Maharaja of Mysore, he was appointed court musician at Mysore. Muthiah Bhagavathar was the first President of the Annual Conference at the Madras Music Academy. He changed the entire landscape of Carnatic music by introducing many Hindustani ragas, for example Sohini and Saarang Malhar, and creating approximately 20 new ragas of his own, such as the famous Hamsanandhi. He ensured that his legacy would live on with such compositions as Bhuvaneshwariya and also through his disciples, the most famous being Madurai Mani Iyer.

Muthiah Bhagavathar's legacy of music lives on in his granddaughter, Veena expert Smt. Rugmini Gopalakrishnan.



**Smt. SWARNALATHA SUBRAMANIAN** is a well known and popular exponent of Carnatic music. She has distinguished herself both as a Carnatic vocalist and devotional singer. She has been giving concerts throughout India. Smt Swarnalatha subramanian hails from the very renowned music family of Harikeshanallur Muthiah Bhagavathar & Justice T.L. Venkataramam Iyer. She had her music training under her paternal uncle Shri Yegneswara Bhagavathar of Bombay who was a direct disciple of Harikeshanallur Muthiah Bhagavathar. After that she had her training under Justice T.L. Venkatarama Iyer in Dikshitar kritis. Her paternal grandmother, H. Sivakama Sundari Ammal has composed many songs & One Ballet on Damayanti Swayamvaram. This ballet has been staged by Kalakshetra, Chennai. A. Venkateswara Iyer who was the son of Gottuvadhyam & violinist Shri Appa Iyer taught her many Muthiah Bhagavathar kritis.

## Sikkil Gurucharan

There was this young boy in a boarding school at Dehradun. Like many other students that we had met during the last fortnight, he was also listening to a Carnatic concert for the very first time. From the moment I started my presentation with Hamsadwani varnam, he broke into uncontrollable laughter, masking it behind his handkerchief. Unluckily for him, he was in the second row and I could clearly see his amusement which had now spread infectiously to his friends nearby. As was my protocol for this tour, I invited him to the stage to strum my Sur sangam/Tanpura for the concert. The idea to ask volunteers from the audience to play the Tanpura was mainly to give them an assurance that we are quite normal to interact with and to give them a first hand experience of all that happens on-stage during a concert. This boy was initially petrified that I had called his bluff but bravely told me the truth when I asked why he couldn't stop laughing. He said bluntly, "Your expressions, sir!" I was struck by his honesty and decided to turn the direction of the concert towards his perspective. Agreed, we musicians use a lot of hand gestures and limb movements in a concert. In my mind, I asked myself why I am moving my hands so rapidly while singing and what makes it so necessary and involuntary. The answer also flashed immediately that I shared with the students. It is all mainly because of the creative aspect of our music. I vividly remember my father requesting me to move my arms a little, now and then, while singing as a 14 year old boy, lest I look like a robot, rigidly repeating line after line in succession. My grandmothers told him that it will happen eventually. Now, my father sometimes has to ask me to curb my mannerism of painting in the air while singing. It is too late, I tell him, because creative expressions probably trigger that part of the brain which sends commands to our hands. I now asked the boy to stand up and talk a little about his school and teachers.

He fluently described everything in a minute and liberally swayed his arms to drive home his point. Well, my little friend, that is exactly what we musicians are doing. We explain in our own language, what we were taught and what we are thinking at that moment, striking a delicate balance between the two, while doing so. By the time this concert ended, most of the young kids were aware and in awe of the "manodharmam" part of our music.

This is just one of the several unforgettable experiences that V. Sanjeev, J. Balaji and I had, during our 15 day tour of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand in addition to Chandigarh. This was a meticulously organised circuit by SPIC MACAY, an award winning movement aimed at spreading our rich cultural heritage to the youth of India. It was a tour that brought us in contact with the outside world, so to speak. A world that lies beyond our regular kutcheri audience who are aware of everything from raga-names to individual idiosyncrasies of every artist in business. This was a world of young minds to whom, music was mainly a choice among Bollywood, "fusion", some North Indian classical and other ancient, unheard forms of music. The bitter truth was that many of the students had not heard our music before. I stopped considering that bitter after the first few concerts, because, for them to appreciate something, they need to be aware of its existence, the relevance of it in their daily lives and its ability to invoke emotions as an art form. These three aspects became our motto for the next fortnight as we, show after show, performed to packed school and college auditoriums to students who now hopefully acknowledge South Indian music as something that is still young and cool!

It was a huge learning curve for the three of us because we rediscovered the dynamism in our music. Each place was different, the audience ranged from a motley bunch of little kids in a small music school in Kangra Valley to the highly disciplined army school students who are about to become India's next batch of NDA cadets to serve the nation, not to forget, the scientific but appreciative minds at IIT Roorkee. This tour gave us the golden chance to understand our music from different perspectives. One girl from Welham School, minutes after the recent Magsaysay Awards were announced, asked me whether musicians are being more socially responsible now than before. My answer was that while it is an individual's choice to be socially responsible, how to frame his or her expression of the art form in a way that brings more participation and patronage, is becoming more important nowadays. A musician needs to be aware of how their art impacts the society and how the society can push it further in the right direction.

Then, there were these two sisters from a lovely little school that educates and empowers women and children in Purkal Village, who prompted me to create ragas in their names as a part of a fun exercise mainly because they wanted to know how our raga system works. These two, for sure, will now remember the process of omitting certain notes from our Melakarta ragas and arriving at a new unused combination. Hopefully they will spread this

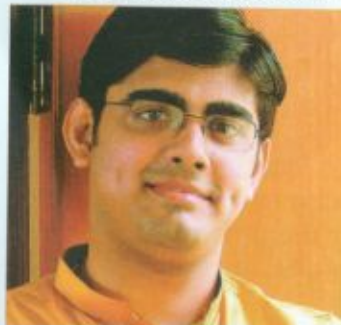
experience to their friends and family who in turn will push our reach even further. In another instance, I was forewarned about a particularly indifferent audience in a management school at Uttarakhand. While racking my brains on how to make my concert interesting, there was this student whose mobile phone blared the ringtone "Neruppu da" as I entered the auditorium. While I was happy at the amazing following that our Thalaivar commanded even among students in Dehradun, I felt happier to share the news about the original Kapaleeshwarar in Chennai who is at the center of music all the time with scores of composers singing His praise since time immemorial. I ended the concert with Kapali in the ragam Mohanam much to the students' amusement on realizing how relevant this music is. The staff later shared their happiness in stating that the receptiveness of the student was something they had rarely seen before. It just boils down to one simple fact - South Indian classical music in its purity and glory is as contemporary as ever.

One striking feature at every venue was the timing of applause. Over the years, I think our brains have evolved to clap after every raga alapana, after a long set of swaras ending with a mathematical formula and after a percussive solo when the song begins again. This tour broke that convention. It was a raw audience to whom sound took precedence over content. If the sound was impressive, they clapped. If they didn't understand, they stayed silent. Hence we were more than happy to be interrupted by claps and cheers right in the middle of sarva laghu swaras, long sustained note of Sa or Ga, short exchanges of swaras between me and Sanjeev on the violin culminating in a joint adventure of notes, thundering beats in different speeds on the mridangam by Balaji, a cascade of brighas in Karaharapriya ragam centered around the upper Madhyamam, a successful attempt at hitting the top most note (even a simple chitta swaram of Nenerunchinanu in Malavi ragam. At the same time, a beautiful alapana of Khamam by Sanjeev was met with pin drop silence in the end. In a way, the mood was set for the sublime "Santar Gopalakrishnam" that followed. It was evident that this new audience loved anything that was exciting and dynamic. Our music has so much and more of these two variants. Take the chitta swaram of the song S Jalandharam in Gambhiranattai, for instance.

It involves singing without taking a breath, 4 cycles of zig zag swaras for about 20 seconds that sent the Pinegrove school kids in Dharampur and Subathu district into a gleeful frenzy. Another set of students in Himachal Pradesh could not get enough of the ragam Niroshtha which has its name, scale, lyrics and chitta swaram all set to the constraint that the lower and upper lip can never touch each other. This was the brain of Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavathar almost 90 years ago. Giving the young listeners, a glimpse of such works made our music more endearing and awesome.

Another historic moment was presenting our music at the legendary Old Gaiety Theatre in Shimla on two consecutive days. We are all so used to getting down from the car just outside the green room for our concerts that having to walk 15 minutes uphill to get to the theatre was a unique experience in itself. The theatre, which is the oldest surviving Gothic structure in the country today, built in 1877, was hosting its very first Carnatic music recital and that alone was a reason good enough for us to power walk those 15 minutes uphill on The Mall. The session with school students was again, stimulating in terms of the questions asked and demonstrations requested. Sample this- "Why are so many swaras shaken and stirred in Indian music while Western music has sound frequencies in the exact place?". We had to then explain the concept of Gamakas or oscillations and ended singing ragas like Dhanyasi and Sahana to make him understand that What You See Is Not What You Get in Carnatic music. The swaras that you see on paper end up being flamboyantly modified and paint a totally different but splendid picture. I heard later that the boy asked his school teacher to give him CDs of our concerts. Humbled, I was.

To sum up, this was one assignment that took us out of our regular environment and enabled us to speak to a different diaspora. The prime focus was not to showcase the depth of our knowledge, but to make them appreciate the striking similarities between various styles of music and how the sum of all parts becomes the grand entity called Indian Classical music. There was many a moment of epiphany for the three of us, bearing witness to the true meaning of Hans Christian Anderson's quote, "Where words fail, music speaks".



**Sikkil C. Gurucharan** is among the foremost young performing musicians of Carnatic music in India today. He is the grandson of Sikkil Kunjumani, elder of the internationally acclaimed flautists the –Sikkil Sisters. Gurucharan has been under the tutelage Vaigal Shri S. Gnanaskandan and is currently being mentored by Shri B. Krishnamurthy. He is an 'A' grade All India Radio artist. The magazine India Today featured him among 35 Game Changers in India, a list of young achievers from different walks of life

## Neyveli Narayanan

Tani Avartanam denotes either the solo exposition of the percussion instrument mridangam in a vocal/instrumental concert or Taval in a Nadaswaram concert, or an ensemble of all percussion instruments like mridangam, kanjira, ghatam, morsing. Playing in detail in a particular Tala which may include different nadais in a Tani Avartanam will be a feast to the rasikas who are longing to understand, know and enjoy the laya intricacies.

There are hundreds of musical instruments, consisting of various types, stringed, wind and percussion to fulfill the different musical preferences of people in the world. There are also many maestros who have played or now playing the so called instruments so as to fully serve the chaste musical tastes of thousands of the music lovers all over the world and to attain eternal bliss. Of all the percussion instruments, mridangam dominates the foremost position both in tonal quality and in exposition of laya intricacies. An experienced mridangam artist not only enhances and lifts the concert which she or he accompanies whether it is a vocal or instrumental music, but also exhibits his or her skill during their solo, in such a manner that the audience who listens to the Kutcheri carry memories of the same for a long time.

**“Sruthi Mata Layah Pitha” meaning shruthi** is the mother and laya is the father, emphasizes the importance of singing to accurate shruti and correct timing. shruti suddha and laya suddha are two eyes or fundamental requisites of all good music.

LAYA: All worldly functions are time or laya-bound. All the activities of our body too, i.e. breathing, heart beat etc. are laya- oriented. Therefore, laya plays an important role in our life. Laya is, otherwise, known as rhythm. In most music systems of the world, laya is represented by talas or other rhythmic structures. It indicates the tempo or Kalapramana and the gait of the song. Music without laya is lifeless. Perhaps, due to this reason, during mourning, mostly viruthams etc. are sung without laya support.

In a Carnatic music concert, the role of providing rhythmic support is that of percussion instruments like mridangam, ghatam, kanjira, morsing, etc. In this regard, the mridangam assumes the role of the main accompaniment and is called a Pakka-Vadhyam (literally meaning the side instrument). The other percussion instruments are optional and are called upa-pakka vadhyams. Their presence, in a concert, will add to the variety and brightness of the concert. In a Nadaswaram concert, the mridangam is substituted by Taval, which singularly provides rhythmic support; there are no other percussion instruments in a Nadaswaram concert.

A music concert comprises songs rendered by the main artist with improvisations like raga alapana, tanam, neraval and kalpanaswaras. These are interspersed with the creative support and display by the accompanists, which include the Tani Avartanam by the mridangam and the other laya vidwans (percussionists).

Tani Avartanam is the exclusive property of the laya vidwans, where they get to show their technical and creative prowess. This is usually played as part of the main item of the concert, after the raga alapana, main song/Pallavi, as the case may be keeping the overall format and content of a concert.



The mridangam artist plays the Tani Avartanam using the same tala in which the main artiste presented the kriti or presents something on his own. This part is called Vinyasa. Thus, he or she has a very wide scope. An able and experienced artiste makes use of his opportunity to exhibit his or her talent and skill in a remarkable way. They display this through the stages of introduction, exposition and conclusion. They conclude with what is known as Kuraippu (progressive tapering of the number of rhythmic cycles per sound), mohra, which are set patterns, before launching into the final stage of Tani Avartanam, the Korvai. Such an exposition of Tani Avartanam by an able artiste can be very provoking and attracts attention of the raikas. To listen to them is an artistic and rhythmic experience by itself.

If there is more than one laya vadhya in a concert, the Tani Avartanam is played in turns, where the general idea is delivered in various phases. In such a case, the artistes generally display the different gatis/nadais in the same tala for sheer variety. It is an usual practice to play different patterns in Chaturasra gati(four) in the first part and in Tisra(three), Khanda(five) or Misra(seven) gati in other parts, depending on the time available. All the percussion artists merge during mohra and play the Korvai together, in a grand finale. Subsequently, the main artiste picks up the song from where he/she left off initially and completes the song.

The most important aspect of Tani Avartanam is that it should generally be in the same Kalapramana(tempo) in which the main artiste has sung the main piece. Besides, it should also be played at the same eduppu(starting point of that particular line of the song where the main artiste left off).

Playing the Tani Avartanam in a concert, as mentioned earlier, is to exhibit the prowess of the percussionists. However, the key word here would be adaptability, according to the main item of the concert, the type of concert (vocal/instrumental) and time availability. If the main item were a kriti, the approach would be different from the exposition for a Ragam, Tanam and a Pallavi. Similarly, if it were a vocal concert, the tonality and playing patterns would be different from that of an instrumental concert.

To summarize, as articulated by Padma Vibhushan Awardee SANGITA KALANIDHI Dr. Umayalpuram Sri K. Sivaraman - "Tani Avartanam is the extension of a song".



**Neyveli R. Narayanan**, hailing from a family of music connoisseurs at Neyveli, Narayanan was initiated into the art of Mrudangam playing at the young age of seven, under the guidance of Sri S.K. Ganesa Pillai. He made his debut at the age of 11 and ever since, he has been rising in his art by furthering his horizons and making a mark in the field of carnatic music. An intensive training under the Maestro Late Thanjavur Sri Upendran brought about a great amount of professionalism in Narayanan's playing. His guru taught him the intricacies and specialties of the Tanjore Style of playing on the mridangam. Narayanan is now blessed with the rare opportunity of being one of the favourite disciples of the Mrudangam Legend Padma Vibhushan Umayalpuram Sri K. Sivaraman. This great influence has brought in a great amount of clarity, precision and perfection in Narayanan's style.

## Bhanu Kumar

The word 'criticism' conjures up a negative connotation of 'finding fault', the act of saying that something or someone is bad; 'the act of expressing disapproval and of noting the problems or faults of a person or thing; a remark or comment that expresses disapproval of someone or something.' But criticism is better described as the act of giving your opinion or careful judgment about the good or bad qualities of something or someone, especially books and films, etc. One specific field of criticism is art criticism, particularly of performing arts like music, dance, and drama.

Art criticism has a twofold benefit; It gives the artiste an external, impartial perspective of the negatives, paving way for correction and improvement; It also provides them supporting material for their CV and if positive and published by an effective media, it enhances their scope of opportunities. For an authentic and erudite criticism, the writer needs to be familiar or better well versed in the art about which he or she writes with authority. We have examples of critics like Leela Venkatraman and Sunil Kothari who are seasoned critics and make their valuable presence felt during programs. There are some who have limited know how and supplement their inference with statistics from Google or from the artistes themselves. It is better to ask and clarify than write incorrect information that would embarrass the publishing media house.

Some critics are feared for their forthright caustic words or high handed attitude of finding fault. I am here reminded of the poet Nakkeerar, who found fault even with Lord Shiva's poetry, in the famous movie Thiruvilaiyaadal. But if the critic is an authority on art forms, artistes look forward to words of approbation. Few reasonable words from such doyens and the artiste's day is made. Like the legendary P V Subramaniam, popularly known as Subbudu, well informed in the technicalities of music and dance, equipped with exemplary bilingual writing skills laced with subtle humour. His words were cherished and quoted by the blessed artistes if he praised them and feared if they were found wanting. Artistes do fear the presence of such critics who spare no one.

Writing strong negative lines may be a deterrent, adding pain to the artistes who are already in this rat race, struggling for acceptance and support. Writers should praise if it is good, praise more if very good but when mediocre or below par, pointing it with practical counsel really helps. Constructive criticism can help improvement as opposed to acidic remarks that may demotivate the artistes and sabotage their career. A critic can play a sizeable role in grooming artistes and propelling them towards growth.

Being a performing artiste myself, I always believe in writing positive reviews," says Vijay Shankar, Mumbai critic for the past three decades. Critics have a cutting edge but they may not use it for cutting artistes to pieces. Partiality and unethical but empathy for the performer makes the writer sensitized.

The basic duty of a critic is to be present at the performance venue in time to take notes and stay till the end to get a feel of the audience pulse. Detailed notes are needed, memory cannot be trusted. Sometimes we get so engrossed in the recital that we forget to note vital information. A phone call or email to the artiste may help to fact check. In this context I am reminded of Kalki Krishnamoorthy, the doyen of Tamil literature and art, who never took notes for his popular widely read column on music and dance. He believed that what remains in your memory when the concert is over should be the content of the review. All are not endowed with such skills, so notes are very vital. Critics are cats and can write in the dark. Using mobile torch or small light can distract or disturb others.

It is imperative to keep the program invite in WhatsApp or email till the article is completed and filed for publication, to ensure authenticity. The overall impression you have on the performance should be the undercurrent emotion, the sthaya bhava of your story. The other features can build around it. The review is all about the artiste, not a portal to flaunt the writer's 'superior knowledge'. A brief summary of the repertoire is enough, not a ball by ball account which makes it monotonous. But it should not be too brief like a pre-event announcement. Brevity is not always the soul of wit. Unbalanced detailing of one element and explaining it at length is not preferred. The review should be analytical, comprehensive and allot space for every piece in the program.

It is advisable to reread the story and correct spelling and punctuation errors if any, and spacing it in a legible format. Tough no doubt but ruthless editing of unwanted ornamentation, and chopping off exaggeration makes the story crisp and a publisher's pet. There are editors above you but it is always better to adhere to the final word count. At times what you thought and cherished as a brilliant quote and flourish may get edited out. It is an understandable practice from the editor's perspective. The layout and positioning of your story is directly proportional to the luck of the artiste featured by you. Some get the centre spread, the lead story honour and prominent pictures while some others get a negligible side line and a stamp size photo, not at all prominent.

The value of art criticism, both to art and artistes in general, is its role in developing and deepening the work of artistes and establishing the relation between a work of art and society. Strong unbiased, undaunted and unflinching critics are needed for art to flourish. Being an art critic gives one a sense of importance, but it should not be misused or taken for granted. The purpose is to highlight good work, encourage the not so good work and not desecrate confidence by vitriolic words. The Pen may be mighty but it is mightier if it can inspire. Impeccable integrity in the writer is a highly desired quality.

Writing is a vast domain that encapsulates various genres. Newspaper articles, in this regard, have great significance, as it is a useful apparatus to inform masses about the current events. With an upsurge of online portals, that have global reach and readership at a minimal cost, many events get coverage and exposure. With active involvement in social media, non-writers also find a vociferous voice. Many posts are like mini reviews; for instance, Jyothi Mohan whose posts on cultural events are exemplary. They are perfect examples of attention to detail and prompt reportage.

The downside of writing that it does not allow the critic to relax and fully enjoy the program. You hesitate to even go for a program like a common rasika, if you are not writing about it. On the upside you enjoy what you are doing.



**Bhanu Kumar** is Freelance writer in English for The Hindu, Times of India and Sruti magazine. She is also a Tamil writer for leading magazines like the Kalki, Mangayar Malar, Ananda Vikatan, Kalaimagal etc. She has been associated with Tamil theatre productions, is a writer, director and actor since last fifteen years. She has won award from Fine Arts Society, Chembur for best drama.

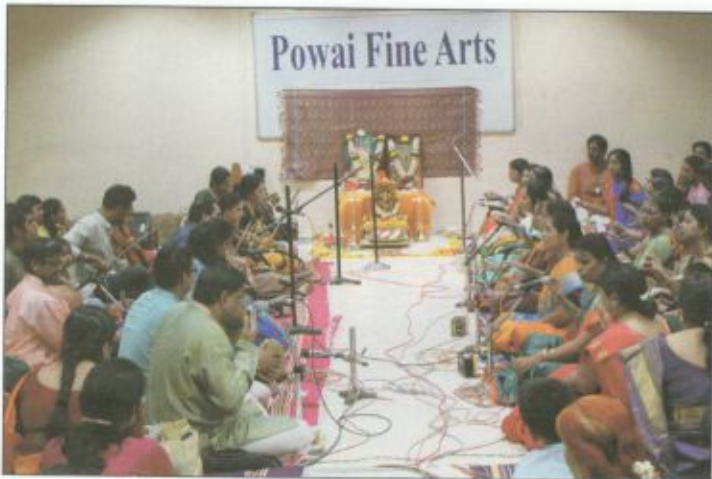
She is an accomplished speaker in Tamil debates and participated twice in Kalyana Malai. Sun TV and in Mumbai debates moderated by Suki Sivam, Solomon Pappaih, Gnanasundaram and Raja. She trains interested people in Tamil mythology and presentations.



**Dr.N.Rajam Inaugurating Powai Fine Arts**



**Iyer Brothers (Australia) on Veena**



**Thyagaraja Aradhana**



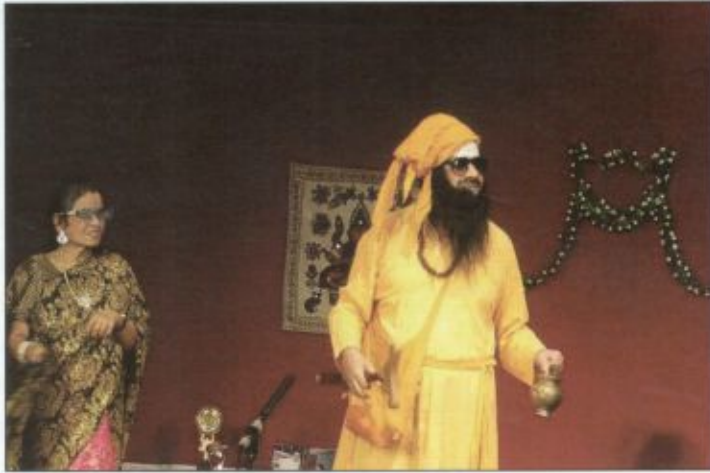
**Trichur Brothers in Concert**



**Thyaga Rahasyam - Bharatanatyam - Roja Kannan**



**Sanggetanjali-Dr.Sriram Parasuram & Sanjeev Chimalgi**



Scene from a Tamil Drama



Sowmya Concert



Sufiana-Alamgir Khan



Nrutya Dhara - Bharatanatyam - Revathi Srinivasaraghavan



Nrutya Varshini - Kuchipudi - Prateeksha Kashi



Nrutya Sandhya - Kuchipudi - Vyjayanthi Kashi



**Nritya Sahhita-Sanjukta Wagh-Kathak**



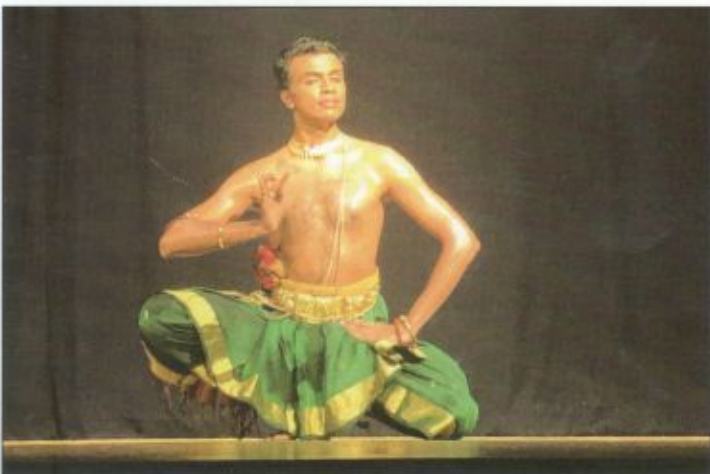
**Nritya Samhita - Manipuri Dancers from Impha**



**Nritya Dhara - Bharatanatyam - Aparna Ramkrishnan**



**Violin Flute Jugalbandi**



**Anand Sachidanandan-Bharathanatyam**



**Pohankar Concert**



**PFA Felicited Padma Vibhushan Dr.Umayalpuram K. Sivaraman in Shanmukhananda Sabha, when the latter conferred on him "Sangeetha Kala Vibhushan" Award in December, 2019.**



**Ranjini and Gayathri Concert**



**Old Bollywood Melodies**



**Students & Parents on Vijayadasami Day**



**Carnatic Concert-Chandana Bala Kalyan**



**Happy PFA Team to Continue...**

# Raag based songs in Hindi Films

## Dr. Ranjini Krishnaswamy

My earliest memory of film music or songs is hearing "aadha hai chandrama raat aadhi" while sitting in a theatre at Bhusawal, even as Sandhya danced with the pots balanced on her head. What fascinated me was not the image of the pots placed precariously, but the song sung by Mahendra Kapoor and Asha Bhosle. The melody, rhythm and the lyrics were enough to send the mind of a young 7 year old into a spin. Since then at every possible opportunity, I would listen to Hindi film songs trying to understand the ragas on which they were based (my father was an extremely good Carnatic vocalist and also an A Grade AIR artiste), the song setting, meaning of the words and the musical instruments used to create the magic. It was only later, much later that I realised that the song was based on Raag Malkauns, usually a raag associated with sad or serious emotions. I was thrilled to know how cleverly "Anna" Chitalkar had used it in such a romantic setting. Even today, I cannot fathom why my parents who were quite conservative in their choice of music (only classical music should be listened to) took me to watch a Hindi film.

Another song that touches the core of your being is "poocho na kaise maine rain bithaye" from "Meri soorat teri ankhen" which had music by Dada Burman and was sung so evocatively by Manna Dey. The song based on Ahir Bhairav, beautifully captures the pathos and angst in a troubled and tormented soul. The movie is worth watching just to see Dadamoni (Ashok Kumar) on whom this song is picturised. S.D.Burman has used folk music and classical raags to great advantage and every song of his, finds itself a place in the lore of film music. Guide's "Tere mere sapne ab ek rang hai" in Khamaj; or "tere bin sooney nayan hamare" in Pilu from "Meri soorat teri ankhen" are songs that make you want to keep singing even as they make you cry.

Other music directors who plunged into the classical chest and created gems were Madan Mohan and Naushad. Every film of theirs had some really unforgettable songs so richly steeped in the classical mould. Madan Mohan's Anpadh had Lataji singing some evergreen numbers like "aap ki nazon ne samjha" based on Adana. The freshness in her voice and the musical arrangement complement each other so well that even today after more than four score years we find aspiring singers singing the song. Naushad's "sawan aaye ya na aaye" in Brindavani Sarang from "Dil Diya Dard Liya" an Indianised adaptation of Wuthering Heights, picturised on a young Dilip Kumar and Waheeda Rehman remains in your mind throughout the film indicating that, yes, tomorrow is another day and rings of optimism.

While we talk of raag based songs, how can we forget Nayyar Saab who claimed he knew no classical music but every composition of his has the imprint of a deeper font - "jaaie aap kahan jayenge" in Pilu from "Mere Sanam" or "Tu hai mera prem devta" from Kalpana set in Raag Lalit or even "chhotasa baalma" from Raagini in Tilang. One really wonders if Nayyar Saab was not just pulling a fast one on all of us.

The famous duo, Shankar-Jaikishen, used the classical oeuvre so wonderfully that you cannot believe that western instruments too can create an Indian classical melody. "O mere sanam, o mere sanam" in Shivaranjani from Sangam or "Ghar aaya mera pardesi" from Awaara in Bhairavi show us how immensely talented the two were. Roshan always, but always, created a unique blend of the classical and acceptable modern music in his films. How can one forget his "Rahen na rahen hum" from Mamta set in Yaman or "na to caravan ki talaash hai" set in Kalavati but in a Qawali style for Barsaat ki Raat.

A Maestro like Vasant Desai always stuck to his roots of classical strength and all his songs richly display his Indian classical mastery whether it is "Bol re papihara" from Guddi in Mian ki Malhar or "Tere sur aur mere geet" from Goonj uthi Shehnai in raag Behaag.



Hindi films are made more memorable because their songs and music based on the richness of Hindustani music. Even R.D Burman who was a rebel of sorts discovered his strength and also won popular acclaim for his "Anamika Prem" which had almost every song based on a raag. When the screen shows Sharmila Tagore mouthing "raag beethi jaye, shyam na aaye" as it starts in Todi, you are raised to another level altogether.

We can go on and on about the use of raags in Hindi films but the idea is just to skim the surface and tantalise so that one can be enticed to learn more and do a deep study and realise how music, films and raags are all entwined; and how fortunate we are to have been born at a time when melody was still king in Hindi films.

Certain raags lend themselves easily to our Hindi film music, such as Yaman, Bhairavi and Pahadi to name a few. I believe that the recall value of film songs do depend a great deal on their being rooted in classical music. Why else would young children sing songs like the Bhairavi based "nain mile chain kahan" from Basant Bahar or "Deewana hua Badal" in Malgunji from Kashmir ki Kali; at competitions and Talent Hunts? Only that music which is pure in form and truly based on a classical base can stand the test of time.

This article is just meant to be a kind of bird's eye view of how creatively our music directors have modified the raags and presented them in films, depending on the situation and requirement. Again there are so many other equally talented and creative composers whom I have not mentioned. To cover all of them and their compositions would require another volume and is truly beyond my limited capabilities.

I will not moan about how the songs of today are so fast paced and heavily dependent on western instruments, or about the bane of remixes and so on. Each one is to his/her taste. But I do believe we have a responsibility to expose our youngsters to our Indian classical music, so that there is a sense of pride and ownership to the heritage that is Indian.

To wind up, and on a lighter note, Yes, our classical music may be heavy and not so easy to understand or master; but like filter coffee, its effect lingers, is longer lasting and the aroma spreads far and wide.



The writer is a National Award winning academician for her contribution to education. When not setting up schools or turning them around, she can be found listening, reading and doing research on Hindi film music.



# Dance Movement Physcotherapy

## Creating the unconscious web through dance and movement

Aparna Ramkrishnan

*“Yatho Hasta thatho Drishti, Yatho Drishti thatho Manah  
Yatho Manah thatho Bhaava, Yatho Bhaava thatho Rasa”*

I was taught the above sloka from the Natyashastra in my first year at the Kalakshetra Foundation. The meaning is, 'where the hands (hasta) are, go the eyes (drishti); where the eyes are, goes the mind (manah), where the mind goes, there is an expression of inner feeling (Bhaava) and where there is bhava, mood or sentiment (rasa) is evoked. From the first line of this sloka, I understood that I need to constantly look at my hands as I did my adavus.

It was only in my third year at Kalakshetra where I was able to put together the rest of the sloka. My teacher asked me to enjoy the process of looking at my hands as they moved around, instead of just plainly looking at them. The word 'enjoy' stayed with me. As I tried it, I felt a difference in my dance and most importantly, in myself. At that point, I was not able to connect the dots of what made me feel different, but I just knew that I liked what I was doing - moving through dance

This realisation hit me after I started my course in Dance Movement Psychotherapy (DMP) several years later at Goldsmiths University in London. Applying enjoyment to my movement meant introducing an emotion to it. This emotion came from within and acted like an impulse to move. The movement in return gave me the joy in dancing. Therefore, I realised that dance had this beautiful interplay between emotion and movement. The dance of movement and emotion is what prompted me to pursue a degree in DMP. Each one has a state of mind which is embodied in movement. When we get in touch with this state of mind and use it in our movement, it resonates within us. This internal state is what reaches out to our external spectator. Therefore, the rest of the sloka, *“Yatho Drishti thatho Manah Yatho Manah thatho Bhaava, Yatho Bhaava thatho Rasa”* became clear. Introducing emotion to the movement (Manah) along with the inner state of mind (Bhava) led to a resonance (Rasa) that created an exchange between the inner and outer world.

Movement has been with us right from the beginning of our existence, starting from the mother's womb. A baby's movement is a way of bridging the inner world and the outer world. This exchange allows the interpersonal relation between the baby and the mother to form. The mother's happiness felt when the baby kicks, resonates within her and reaches the baby. Once the baby is born, the only mode of communication is through movement or gestures. Therefore, for a baby, all their emotions and thoughts are represented in their movements. Slowly, the child is able to use words to communicate. However, as the infant grows, it takes along the early movement experiences and unconsciously stores them in the body. Many psychoanalysts believe that we develop our sense of self (ego) through the interactions and experiences we have in childhood. These experiences set the stage for later experiences and are unconsciously re-enacted in adulthood. For example, Sigmund Freud says that depression caused in adulthood, maybe due to internalisation of anger in childhood. Here the internalised anger is suppressed and held deep within us. Our body holds onto these memories unconsciously. DMP allows the individual to re-connect with those experiences and bring awareness to those suppressed emotions by trying to recreate those subconscious movements. It helps one creatively trace and explore one's journeys that is derived for the past and carried to the future, while being in the 'here and now'.

This dynamic and exploratory quality Dance Movement Psychotherapy is what intrigues me the most. Internalizing experiences through movement feels like looking deep within oneself through a microscope. I became more sensitive to my feelings and emotions, and learned to acknowledge them. I learned that being sensitive to one's emotions is a process of self-care as it gives a chance of expression rather than ridding oneself of the experience. Movement allowed the process of expression and sensitization. Therefore, I thought, it was the best way to care for oneself.

The therapeutic use of dance and movement was recognised in the 1940s in the UK. Since then there have been several pioneers in this field who shaped the theory and practice of Dance Movement Psychotherapy. One of the significant figures was Rudolf Laban(1879-1958). His contribution was the systematic categorisation of movement analysis. In DMP, the therapist uses his work to help gain more insight into the client's unconscious emotions by assessing the movements. Each movement assessment differs between clients. Learning the vast theoretical and practical aspects of DMP, made me realise how movement has the ability to create differences and similarities between every individual.

I was reminded of one prayers of the Theosophical Society that we chanted every day in Kalakshetra. It was written by Dr. Annie Besant, President of the Theosophical Society in 1923. It encompasses the true purpose of psychotherapy that helps one become attuned with one's own consciousness and connect that consciousness to the universal consciousness.

**"O! Hidden Life, vibrant in every atom;  
O! Hidden Light, shining in every creature;  
O! Hidden Love, embracing all in Oneness;  
May each who feels himself as one with Thee,  
Know he is therefore one with every other"**

The immediate question that arises is, why "hidden"? Here, the hidden life is referred to something that is beyond the physical existence of all that we see. It is truly the "hidden life" that is manifested in all. This "hidden life" pulsates within every atom of nature. Therefore, all of nature pulsates with the rhythm of the ultimate reality. The "hidden light" referred here is the light that is present in each of us. This light radiates inwardly and can be considered as the light of the soul. The "hidden love" that embraces all in oneness is the relationship of each individual with the eternal one. Hence, it embraces all in oneness. We are all part of the universe that is present everywhere and is present in all. This "hidden love" makes us one.

"May each who feels himself as one with Thee", what is it to feel oneself with the supreme? Feeling is an acute awareness of oneself. This complete awareness allows us to consciously realise the oneness with the supreme. Once we feel this complete and true realisation of oneness, then we realise the conscious unity that exists. Hence, "Know he is therefore one with every other". Once, there is self-realisation, we can positively spread it out to the world and create a space of unity, brotherhood, wholeness and holiness.

I believe Dance and movement establishes this oneness within one self and within society. Through the therapeutic relationship between the therapist and client, the awareness of ourselves is acknowledged and then explored creatively through movement. This creative interchange leads to a space of intersubjective experiences that merges and differentiates. Here, empathy forms and creates an unconscious web that links internal sentiments within the space and resonates to the environment around.



**Aparna Ramkrishnan** (aparnaramkrishnan@gmail.com) is a Post Graduate diploma holder in Bharatnatyam from Kalakshetra Foundation, Chennai. She also holds Masters degree in Medical Sociology from Madras University with distinction. She is currently in London pursuing her Masters degree in Dance Movement Psychotherapy at Goldsmiths, University of London.

# Kalasadan of Mumbai & Guru Kalasadan Mani

## Nandini Ganesan



*Kalasadan Institute of Fine Arts*, founded by Guru Shri Mani, is one of the oldest cultural institutions in Mumbai. What started off as a single man's love for the art, has now branched out to become a family, across generations that is engaged in the preservation, teaching and propagation of Bharatanatyam and Carnatic music in their divine and dignified forms.

But how did it all begin? As the naïve grand-child, all that I remember about Guru Mani is the doting grand-father that he was. Always smiling, playful, warm and full of zest that, one would never feel intimidated in the presence of such a guru. Years after I left my home to go and learn dance further with my guru in Chennai, is when I realized and appreciated who exactly my grand-father was and what parampara I belonged to.

### From M. P. Mani to Guru Kalasadan Mani:

**The Early Life:** Born on 5th September, 1922, in a small village in Thrissur district. Moorkanikara, Parameshwara Mani (M P Mani), was the eldest son in a family of 10 children. His father was a Mathematics teacher in the local school and was known to be a disciplinarian.

A brilliant student, endowed with beautiful handwriting, he was a scholarship holder all through his academic years. Also, being in the cultural hub of the state, his artistic inclination was fostered in those influential years of his life. Intrigued by theatre, dance and music he would miss his night's sleep to sneak out of the house and watch Kathakali offerings in the temples.

**The Shishya:** After his education, Guru Mani came to Bombay to earn a living and was employed as a librarian with the famous International Book House. However, his inner love and interest for Indian art and culture along with his association with like-minded colleagues culminated in the forming of Chetana Cultural Center, a pioneer group that organized many performances for various artistes in Mumbai during the period 1940-1950. Simultaneously, he also learnt Bharatanatyam from Guru Smt. Karunambal and her husband Guru Shri Govindaraja Pillai, under the guidance of Bharata Vidwan Guru Shri Kuppaiah Pillai of the Raja Rajeshwari Bharatnatya Kala Mandir.

Coming from a Brahmin household and highly inspired by E. Krishna Iyer and Rukmini Devi, he was one of the rare male students who took to learning dance against his family's wishes and was ridiculed by some others. His Guru Smt. Karunambal, would say, "Driven by passion for the art, he continued his training with no inhibitions. Many of the adavus (steps) were done more gracefully by him than the girls in the class."

**The Founder:** Guru Mani stood first in the practical and theoretical examination in Bharatnatyam held by the Government School of Music and Dance of Hyderabad in 1952. He was asked to take charge of the institution as Principal but he declined it, since its rules restricted his creative freedom. He came back to Bombay and established Kalasadan Institute of Fine Arts in 1954 with the help of Shri A.M. Ramnath to serve the cause of

Fine Arts in a manner, which he dreamt and visualized. In the initial stages, it was tough due to various constraints. There are a lot of instances narrated by some of his senior students such as Meenakshi, Indira and Lalitha. One of them recollects, "when he came to teach and was offered food, he would have it thinking, he could save the money to travel by bus and not walk back all the way from Worli to Sion."

**The Connoisseur and Guru:** By nature, he was a very affectionate and benevolent teacher. As a guru, he was a picture of humility and compassion, never tired or bored of teaching or discussing about music or dance. Guruji, as his students fondly called him, always thought of new ideas to propagate dance. All the students at Kalasadan, started their learning journey with him. He never had any other teacher or an assistant. He had an innate ability to gauge the potential and talent of his students and had a spiritual connect with them. To his credit, he has created a lot of dance productions for the institution.

Quoting Karunambal, she would say, "His Gurubhakti is a rare one, to be cherished. We never thought he would have been so serious about pursuing his art and creating an 'aalamaram'(banyan tree)- a family of art. He would have won name and fame as an exponent of Bharatnatyam, had it not been for his sacrifice on a personal level to utilize his talent and resources for a larger benefit."

His open-mindedness can be seen in how he translated his teachings and evolved with the changing times. He was traditionally trained in the Thiruvaidaimardur baani, but he also adopted nuances from the Vazhuvoor school represented by Kamala Laxman at that time.

**The Visionary:** Guru Mani was multifaceted, with brilliant planning abilities. Simple living and high thinking summarized his lifestyle as a revered teacher, a creative choreographer and an astute organizer.

In the later years of his career, he focused on establishing the Chintamani Ashram of Fine Arts. It was his dream to create an abode for fine arts where all forms of art could be preserved and spread across the masses, and individuals were not limited by their economic conditions to explore their talent. He was actively involved in all the activities of the institute till he breathed his last on 28th of June, 2006 at the age of 84.

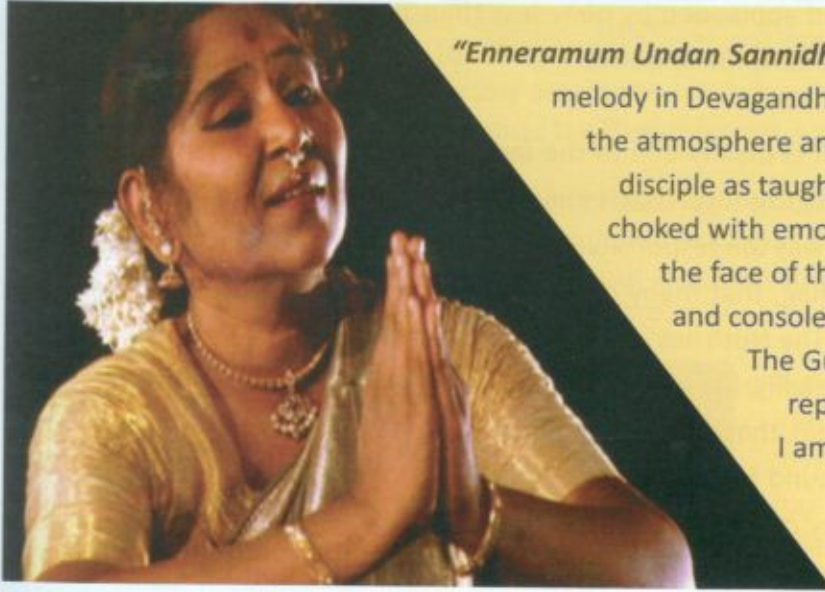
**Present:** With the blessings of Guruji and Guruma Meenakshi, who was the backbone of Kalasadan, today, Kalasadan has branched out to 11 centres around Mumbai, Navi Mumbai and Titwala in the last 65 years and the guru-shishya parampara is being continued by Guru Mani's sons- Natrajgopal(Raja) & Ranganath(Ganesh), daughters Sharada & Uma, sons in law- Ganesan & Narainswamy, his grand-children- my cousin Sriram & myself. Kalasadan is also actively working on reviving Guruji's dream project of the Ashram.



**Nandini Ganesan** is grand daughter and disciple of Natanacharya Guru Kalasadan Mani. After her initial training under her mother Guru Sharada Ganesan and uncle Guru Natrajgopal, Nandini received the national scholarship for dance awarded by the Government of India through which she has undergone advanced training under the doyenne of bharatnatyam Padmashri Guru Chitra Visweswaran. A doordarshan graded artiste and an empaneled artiste with carrying forward the family tradition of teaching the art, continues to perform globally

# The one and only One Bala

## Nandini Ramani



*"Enneramum Undan Sannidhiyil Irukka Venum Ayya Ponnayya"* - the moving melody in Devagandhari ragam sung by a voice laden with Bhava filled the atmosphere and the lines were being depicted in Abhinaya by a disciple as taught by her teacher in front; suddenly the voice was choked with emotion and the student saw tears trickling down on the face of the singer-teacher. The student rushed to find out and console her Guru at this moment of emotional outburst. The Guru then showed in gestural language at first and repeated in words to the student - "because of you, I am now in Chidambaram; you have taken me there literally through this session of the Padam. I have now envisaged Him".

The teacher was the great Bala (Balasaraswati) and the student being the author of this article. Such was the unique involvement of Bala for whom Bharatanatyam was the sole pursuit of life. She was indeed an "Ekaagrachitta" - "concentrated mentally on only one aim", that was dancing. The memory of Bala, is a cherished fragrance to those fortunate to have witnessed her great art. A follower of the Thanjavur tradition, as handed over to her by her Guru Kandappa Pillai, also of the Thanjavur line, Bala adhered to her Sampradaya in the strict manner until her last performance. Following a full Maargam of repertoire even at her ripe age, a perfect Araimandi, well-executed "kitatarikitatom", chiseled Hasta and Pada viniyogas, marked the heights of purity and standard in her recitals. Her "excellence in Nritha" (pure dance) was a special feature that deserves mention, for many know her only as the "Queen of Abhinaya"; she thrilled the audience with her limitless offerings of exquisite Abhinaya which were unique in their own way, with an innate beauty, as serene representations of "visualised form of music" through the medium of Bharatanatyam.

The art of Balasaraswati was one of pristine quality that was based more on a Bhakti-oriented approach. Her handling of the sentiment of Sringara, was unique in its own way that it was always coated with dignity. Her strong belief in traditional aspects of the art gave her a unique status in the "world of dance". Her mingling into one with any composition that she performed or taught was something special as her imagination for the Abhinaya portions would flow on and on, and her extraordinary skill would immerse the student or viewer in a state of ecstasy. In this context one could even refer her as "Abhinaya Mahodadhi" (Great ocean in the art of mime). Subtlety and propriety (Aucitya) were unique features of her inimitable interpretative technique.

A strict art disciplinarian, Bala seemed a tough personality for many who did not understand her well. A very light-hearted, colourful, simple woman that Bala was, her life was filled with several hardships that were entwined with her art; it gave her a personality that was somewhat unapproachable for many; she had to be so for the upkeep of the strict traditional values of her art. Until she reached the pinnacle of her life, Bala's artistic path was not one strewn with roses. Nothing worked out easily for her; her patience, perseverance, respect to her Guru and

The Yakshaganam is a genre of literature which was written with the specific purpose of presentation with music and dance. This is evident from the raga and tala-melody and rhythm- ascribed to each daru(song). A story, unfolding of events and an auspicious end is the grid on which Yakshaganam is built. The decorations on this grid are the appealing choornikas, dwipadas and darus of various kinds. This tradition of Maratha literature is fresh unexplored pasture. It is coloured in vibrant southern hues and flavoured with the piquant spice pervasive in this region. This is the heady fragrance of Thanjavur Marathi, which itself was a blend of Tamil, Sanskrit, Telugu and ancient Marathi.



This created a new genre which opened a new horizon unlike the previous Yakshaganams of the Nayak regime which was entirely in Telugu and a smatter of Sanskrit. The Maratha scholars fall back on their origins, history and regional culture to paint a tapestry of word pictures unique to that era.

The Telugu natakams also contains verses in Sanskrit. Similarly, the Marathi natakam, uses the same model and has an amalgamation of Sanskrit and ancient Marathi. Historically, the first ever Marathi drama of Marathi theatre history, was written by the Maratha Raja Shahji II of Thanjavur. In 2002, a unique experiment was conducted as collaboration between Melattur and Mumbai. We selected Sakuntalnatak, a Yakshaganam by Maharaja Ekoji II. Musicians and actors from the Melattur Sangam sang and danced to the Marathi music compositions set in Mumbai. Two roles, Sutradhar and Vidhushak, required actors who spoke Marathi. So, two actors trained under me. All other actors were from Melattur. It was when I worked on this Yakshaganam that I realised the beauty Marathi Yakshaganams and its rich, decorative poetry..



**Indumati Raman** is an alumna of Kalakshetra, Chennai. As Hon. Chairperson & Patron of Melattur Bhagavata Mela Natya Vidya Sangam from 1993 to 2002, she was Curator and Organiser of five festivals in Mumbai, Chennai and Thiruvaiyaru to promote this ancient tradition. Her book 'Bhagavata Mela My Tryst with Tradition' was published in 2018. Indumati continues her mission to research and promote Bhagavata Mela.

# The Art of Choreography

## Vaibhav Arekar

Choreography - the art of making dance, of writing a poetry of movements, of re-creating an experience of life- with its many possibilities, has always fascinated me. Personally, to me, it came as a natural extension of being a dancer and not as an acquired expertise. I was never aware that I had to make dance, I just wanted to. The multiple mechanisms of choreography - creating a content, revisiting the form, reinterpreting the technique, exploring emotions and life experiences - are exciting.

The entire facets of choreography are beyond the scope of the space here. Hence I have decided to share three postcards narratives on the process of choreography.

A) Being an artist of this world is challenging. As a dancer-choreographer i am constantly questioning my dual existence. Me - living in these concrete jungles and me - living within the classical jingles of Bharatanatyam. How do I seek my existence in this ?

There is no sound of cuckoos but the honking of vehicles, no buzzing bees but humming of manmade engines, no cool breeze from the Malaya mountains, but those chills from the air conditioners, and so on...

I want to seek the relevance of the truth of Bharatanatyam for today's world but also want to reflect the truths of my present experiences through the idiom of Bharatanatyam. It is not my duty but my need. Nor do I seek permanent answers to these questions because if I do, which scares me, I shall be no more than dead truth.

Out of this search of identity arose our new production 'Vasant-Grishma-Varsha-Shishir - Vasant'. The nayika, in Grishma, has been betrayed not only by her beloved, but by the society in which she lives. She has had no choice but to remain SILENT.

The challenge lay in adding a different intention to the body movement which was going beyond the frame of a classical nayika. How does the (a) hasta carry this experience? How does the body show the inflicted emotional pain, where is the point where one sees the scars of the wound Where is it that she shows the scars of her inflicted wounds?

B) As a choreographer the process of creation is immersive and unique. A choreographer starts to imagine or create visual imageries around the concept or the given theme. The visual scripting then that is born in the mind is conscious effort, pre-imagined, calculated, voluntary, and planned. Yet on floor one has to let an involuntary impetus initiate the flow of the actual choreography. But there are times when you look back and wonder, how did the choreography happen? In my case it was for the work called TRAYYANTA.

The theme 'Upanishads' brought me to words like 'emptiness', 'silences', 'beyond', 'experiential', 'Jnyana marga', 'Within', and yet no imageries grew out of them. The words simply kept floating in my mind. Sometimes they took the form of movement which was listless or even insipid. (For me personally, the end product is not the visual that inspires, but the process itself. The process has to bring out moments of truth that will flow into movement in time and space.) I kept patience doing nothing much but contemplating, watching, observing, reading, failing, moving. And yes, finally the yarn of choreography emerged; emerged as if it came out of nothing and merged into nothingness.



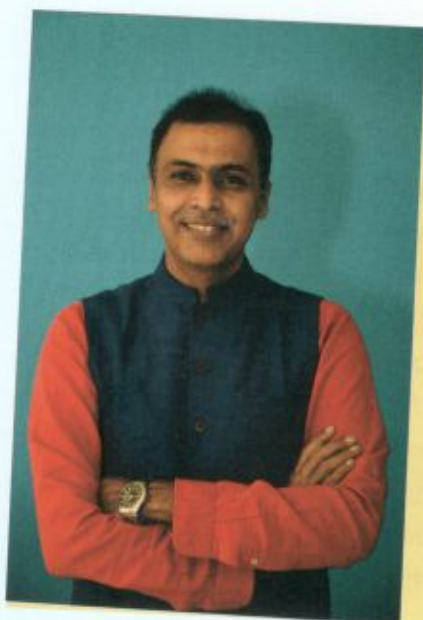
C) What are we, but a bunch of experiences: When we see or feel a certain happening there is always a wave of responses that emerge. It could be - the setting sun, waking up to the sound of the alarm, the first morsel of food, the cool breeze or the fiery sun, people walking with different intentions, the sound of the bazaar and many such innumerable and diverse ones. They all necessarily elicit (a) psychological, physical, emotional responses or at times all three. All of these responses create imprints - some may last longer than the others, some may be deleted, some kept in waiting, some lingering aimless but most of them go unnoticed and uncared for. Just like our breath that we are aware of yet taken for granted. As a dancer - choreographer it is vital to recognise every experience or at least become aware of it. Many a times, or rather most certainly, it is a conscious effort to retain them. For these imprints are experiences that make up art of dance. It is out of them that dance imageries will flow out or a given imagery finds a much needed emotional impetus to validate it. A choreographer travels, in this fascinating world of experiences, from 'inside to outside', while a dancer journeys from 'outside to inside'.

The choreographer, during the creative process, has to be patient, hold silence within and recall the experience. Then like an onlooker re-watch, re-experience and realise what moves you. The awakened experience in turn speaks to you and nudges you to narrate it to the world. Well, what else can this narration be but the very language of dance.

This process is the trigger point which gives rise to the smallest of movement or may be even a phrase of dance. There is always a big trigger point that creates the concept while many smaller ones help to build a truthful work of dance.

The process of creation, one must realise, is extremely intimate and fragile. For the truth to seep into the movement vocabulary that is devised, this 'I' has to be kept aside. But let's keep this discussion for another day.

For now let the personal experiences of life light up your art of dance.



**Vaibhav Arekar**, one of leading male Bharatanatyam soloist of India, is trained under virtuoso teachers - Smt. Saroja Srinath and Smt. Tangamani Nagarajan and his mentor Dr. Smt. Kanak Rele. Vaibhav has done his B.F.A. and M.F.A. from Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya. Impressions and experiences from dance performances, in India and abroad, along with his creative impulse have influenced Vaibhav's performance and choreography.

An intense, calm and strong masculine approach is Vaibhav's signature style. As a soloist he has performed at prestigious dance festivals like the Khajuraho, Music academy, Sangeet Natak Akademi, Modhera etc...

Sankhya Dance Company, founded by Vaibhav Arekar - its artistic director, energized and inspired by young dancers, is the only professional dance company of western India. Apart from extensive Indian tour Vaibhav, as a soloist and, with his dance company have been invited to perform in Japan, Brazil, Canada, USA, Poland, Russia, Germany, France, Australia.