Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira awarded “Raga Laya Prabha” to Vocalist Amrutha Venkatesh and Vainika “Ashwin Anand” on 15th June 2014. This award is to commemorate the memory of the Founder-Director, Karnataka Kalashree GV Ranganayakamma and her sister, Founder-Patron and Veena artiste Dr. GV Vijayalakshmi. The award carries a cash prize of rupees Twenty Five Thousand and a citation. Senior Vocalist Vidwan Malladi Suribabu presented the award in front of a large gathering.

The award function was followed by a rare concert of Vidwan Malladi Suribabu, Malladi Sreeramprasad, Malladi Ravikumar accompanied by Vidwan S Varadarajan on violin, Vidwan Mannargudi Eswaran on Mridangam and Paniraj on Ghatam.
Dear Readers,

“Kalavantha 2014” organised by the consortium of ten reputed music institutions (Karnataka Fine Arts Council-KFAC), brought to light the future torchbearers of Karnatak music. The best of the youth selected from across the country, performed for a week in what could be termed as the one and only one of its type. Needless to say, the concept and the actual implementation was a roaring success. While KFAC awarded the best of the talent, the actual winner was KARNATAC MUSIC. Hopefully, KFAC will harvest this success and significantly serve music and its fraternity in the days to come.

Continuing our march towards Saint Thyagaraja's Kshetra kritis, we take you to “Srirangam” this time. Srirangam set of pancharatna kritis occupy a special place among Thyagaraja kshetra kritis. Incidentally river Cauvery is the common link between Srirangam and Thiruvaiyaru where the saint composed the ghana raga pancharatna.

Several historical references point to the fact that all creation is made up of five elements space, air, fire, water and earth. There are five temples dedicated to lord Shiva, each one representing one of the five forms. Muthuswamy Dikshitar has dedicated kritis on each of these deities and the article “Panchalinga Stala Kritis” is an eye opener.

I am sure the evolution of music recording in India by Shri.Vikram Sampath will be interesting to our readers.

Those who attended the 12 year old Ramana’s Veena concert were thrilled with his performance. I urge those who missed to visit live.shaale.com. Don’t miss the review of the said concert in this issue.

Anand S

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**Contents**

2 Srirangam Pancharatna Kritis of Sadguru Thyagaraja
4 Kalavantha 2014 review
9 Child talent Ramana’s scintillating Veena concert
9 Changing Soundscapes - History and evolution of audio recording in India
13 Panchalinga stala kritis - Dikshitars tribute to lord Shiva
16 Special Vocal Trio Concert by Malladi family
17 Wholesome music of Ashwathnarayanan
19 Voice of the violin soul - Subramanyam VV

**Contributors and Photo courtesy:**


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

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

**Magazine Committee**

Editor - Anand S  

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Walajahpet Venkataramana Bhagavatar, a foremost disciple of Sadguru Tyagaraja Swami, extols his Guru's virtues in this verse. He says his Guru is Vedavyasa incarnate in discussions about the Vedas, Valmiki in his soft speech, Sukadeva in his steadfast dispassion and Prahlada, the greatest Vishnubhakta, in his undeterred devotion.

Sadguru Tyagaraja has immersed us all in the ocean of music and Ramabhakti with his vast array of kritis. Most of us are aware of his famous five gems, the Ghana Raga Pancharatnas. But he has also composed other sets of pancharatnas on the deities of Lalgudi, Srirangam, Kovur and Tiruvottriyur. It is still not entirely clear if these were indeed composed in sets of 5 or at various periods of his life and then compiled for convenience.

The vaggeyakara, sometime in the 1830s, undertook a pilgrimage that spanned from Tirupati to Srirangam/Lalgudi via Madras, Tiruvottriyur and Kovur. Here we shall take a look at his kriti on the presiding deity of bhuloka vaikuntha or Sriranga kshetra. This kshetra, with its idyllic setting in the midst of the akhanda Kaveri, fertile green banks and the awe inspiring and massive Ranganatha or Namperumal temple, has evoked many a grand kriti out of several composers (Purandara Dasa's Ille vaikuntha and Muttusvami Dikshitar's Ranganayakam in Nayaki, to name a few). The 5 kritis composed here are: cutamu rare (arabhi), rajuvedale cutamu rare (todi), vinarada no manavi (devagandhari), karuna judamaiya (saranga) and the very popular o rangasayi (kambhoji).

It is interesting to note that in several kritis, the saint identifies himself with Vibhishana and Sugriva. This maybe because they all experienced agony at the hands of their respective brothers and found solace and salvation only at the feet of Lord Rama. Tyagaraja Swami's brother Japyesa was materialistic and craved the glory and appreciation of the Tanjore Court. He was everything that his illustrious brother was not. He wanted his brother to sing in praise of the King and win his favour. But Tyagaraja Swami refused to compose about anyone other than his Lord.

The idol of Lord Ranganatha in Srirangam has a special connection to Vibhishana and Sri Tyagaraja draws attention to the sthala purana in the kriti, Cutamu rare (Arabhi). In this song he refers to Ranganatha as one worshipped by Sitapati, Rama (Sitapati pujudata). Legend has it that, after the war at Lanka, Vibhishana comes to Ayodhya with Sri Rama for the pattabhisheka (coronation) and when it is time for him to return to Lanka, he asks Sri Rama for the idol of Ranganatha which has been worshipped by the Ikshvaku (solar dynasty) kings for several generations. Rama gladly agrees. But the other gods, led by Indra, are uneasy with the idea of this idol being instated in Lanka, the capital city of rakshasas. So they send Lord Ganesha to trick Vibhishana into leaving the idol at the pristine spot of Srirangam, ensconced between two streams of the holy river Kaveri.

The Srirangam pancharatnam is testament to the fact that the saint was familiar with the poetry of the Azhwars. In the Arabhi kriti he invites all young damsels to come along and have a glimpse of Lord Ranganatha. This scenario is very similar to that of Sri Andal in some of her pasurams, in which she...
wakes all her young sakhis (friends) to go see the Lord. This is also in keeping with the primary tenet of the Bhakti tradition in which all devotees are females and the Lord (Paramapurusha) is the only male principal. So Sri Tyagaraja possibly assumes himself to be a gopi or nayika and summons his other sakhis to have darshan of Sri Ranganatha. In fact, he addresses the Lord as Paramapurusha in the Saranga kriti, karuna judamaiya.

As someone who had made his home in Tiruvaiyyaru (the land of 5 rivers, 5 tributaries of the Kaveri), Sadguru Tyagaraja was mesmerized and well aware of the grandeur of this holy river. Therefore he draws attention to the mother Kaveri in several of his compositions, such as muripe mu gali in Mukhari (iduleni malayamarutamu gudina kaveri tatamandu). In the Srirangam pancharatna set, he addresses to the Kaveri in 3 kritis (Devagandhari, Todi and Saranga). In both, vinarada na manavi and karuna judamaiya, he addresses Sri Ranganatha as Kaveri Ranga, almost as if the Lord draws His identity from the river!

The story goes that Sri Tyagaraja composed songs on the Lord of Rangapuri and sang them as he came on a procession along the Chitraveethi. The saint was then summoned for a blissful darshan of Sri Ranganatha inside the garbhagrha (sanctum sanctorum). In the Todi kriti, rajuvedale, he describes the divine form of the Lord, covered in precious ornaments, coming down the Chitraveethi, along the banks of the Kaveri.

When the saint visited the garbhagrha of the temple, the Lord was reposed on Ananta Adi Sesa and completely bedecked in garlands of pearls. This is known as the mutthangi sevai. The grand kambhoji kriti, o rangasayi, is said to have been inspired by this magnificent sight (mutyalasarula yuramunuganavacciti). In this kriti he reprimands The Lord saying, "if you, with Mahalakshmi by your side, think this is vaikuntha on earth and forget us, what is to become of us?"

It is fascinating to observe the choice of appropriate words that conjure images of the kshetra before our eyes. Moreover, these are set in apt ragas that invoke the exact emotions that allow us to connect with the vaggeyakara. This combination of sadbhakti and satsangita in this Nadopasaka’s kritis is what makes them stand the test of time.

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SRLKM congratulates the following “Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar” awardees instituted by the Sangeeth Natak Akademi, New Delhi.

Gayatri Girish - Karnatak Vocal
Ranjani and Gayatri Balasubramanian - Karnatak Vocal
Vishaka Hari - Traditional Music (Tamilnadu)
BC Manjunath - Karnatak Instrumental (Mrudangam)
N Guruprasad - Karnatak Instrumental (Ghatam)
Anirudh Athreya - Karnatak Instrumental (Kanjira)

Entry to all the concerts of SRLKM is FREE. We do welcome music patrons to come forward and extend financial Contributions/ Sponsorships voluntarily and liberally, so that all music lovers can utilize the valuable opportunity to enjoy classical music. These donations carry exemption as per 80G of IT Act, 1961.
An innovative endeavour by a group of eminent connoisseurs of music has resulted in the birth of Karnataka Fine Arts Council (KFAC) in Bangalore. There are as many cultural organisations as there are extensions in our ever expanding Bruhat Bengaluru which cater to the needs of the local residents in the field of fine arts and culture. But this is the first time ten such leading and prestigious organisations have come together under a single banner and promise to make KFAC’s Kalavanta a national level cultural extravaganza. This eight-day festival (May 18-May 25) held at The Bangalore Gayana Samaja, was inaugurated by Dr. N. S. Krishnamurthy, retired Director of All India Radio, Vidwan Malladi Suribabu and other veteran Musicians who graced the occasion.

Dr. N.S Krishnamurthy was very enthusiastic about this festival and said that the artists, many of whom are working professionals, have great passion towards the art and that KFAC should be lauded for encouraging young talent.

Music lovers can eagerly await the Kalavanta Music Festival every year. Congratulations to KFAC! Their initiative is definitely worth emulating by others. Let many more federations emerge. Our young talents really deserve more encouragement. The invitation by the KFAC to the young artistes to participate in the said festival was a golden opportunity and they utilised it fully and gave their best. The highly appreciative audience turnout, notwithstanding the programs being webcast live, was very encouraging. Two concerts were scheduled everyday each lasting 1.5 hours.

The judges for the concerts were Vidwan Malladi Suribabu, Mridangist Vidwan A.V Anand, N.S Krishnamurthy, retd. Director of AIR, and Vidushi M.S Sheela, all veterans in the field of Karnatak Music. The Judges were all praise for the initiative taken by the KFAC and gave encouraging words of advice to the performing young artistes.

Kum. Apoorva Krishna a disciple of Smt Lalgudi Srimathi Brahmanandam and Smt. Anuradha Sridhar, received the Kalavanta 2014 award for her excellent violin solo concert. Sri.Vittal Rangan, a student of Vidushi Smt. A Kanyakumari received the best accompanying Violinist Award, while Sri. N.C Bharadwaj, disciple of Mridangam Maestro Vidwan Umayalapuram K. Sivaraman, received the best accompanying Mridangist award.

Curtains came down at the Bangalore Gayana Samaja on Sunday, the 25th May, 2014 as the National Youth Festival in Karnatak Music “Kalavanta 2014” concluded with a grand finale concert by youth Icon Vidwan Abhishek Raghuaram who was accompanied by HK Venkatram and Arjun Kumar.

The festival saw outstanding young performers some of them are still studying while others are highly qualified and have started their careers. They all have one thing in common i.e. passion for Karnatak Music, that they are pursuing with devotion and dedication. Trained by great musicians these young stars are already shining like diamond in the horizon of Karnatak music. Brief review of the 14 concerts follows;

18th May, 2014
1) Aishwarya Vidya Raghunath-Vocal, Adithi Krishnaprakash-Violin, Akshay Anand-Mridangam

The KFAC’s week long festival of Kalavanta 2014 commenced with the concert by Kum. Aishwarya Vidya Raghunath. She started her spirited performance with a Varna in Shahana followed by Ikanaina in Raga Pushpalathika with a brief ragalapana, neraval and swara prastara. After Seshchalanayakam in Varali, she chose Begade for a detailed exposition followed by Kriti Nadopasana. Adithi gave a good support on the violin and Thaniavarthana by Akshay Anand, disciple of Mridanga
Vid. KS Kalidas was greatly appreciated by the knowledgeable audience. Aishwarya concluded her concert with a Padam in Huseni and Purandaradasa's Devaranama Kelano Hari in Raga Suruti.

2) Kartik Narayan-Vocal, Dileep K.J–Violin, Vineet KH-Mridanga

Young Kartik Narayan, a disciple of Rajkumar Bharathi, has a pleasing voice. He started with Saveri Varna ‘Sarasuda’ followed by Purandaradasa’s Sathatha Gananatha in Mohana. Saint Tyagaraja’s Kriti Bagayanayya had a superb rendition of Raga Chandrjayothi and interesting kalpana swaras. Both Dileep on the violin and Vineeth on the Mridanga gave excellent support. After Sarasijanabhasodari in Naga Gandhari, Kartik took up Shankarabharanam for the main piece Sarojadalanetri of Sri Shyama Sastry. Thani avarthana by Vineeth, a disciple of Patri Satish Kumar was very well received. The concert ended with a delectable Tillana in Raga Sindhubhairavi.

19th May, 2014

1) Apoorva Krishna-Violin, N.C.Bharadwaj-Mridanga (both won awards for their performance)

Kum. Apoorva received the First Kalavanta 2014 award, for the Best Main Artist for her solo violin performance and Sri. N.C. Bharadwaj who accompanied her on the Mridanga received the best Mridanga accompaniment award. Together they presented a very scholarly and enjoyable performance.

Apoorva began her solo violin concert with Charukeshi Varnam of Violin Maestro Lalgudi Jayaraman. A flashy glimpse of Charukeshi raga before opening the Varna itself, revealed her potential and her flawless bowing and fingering technique. She strictly adhered to the tradition while playing both the ragas and kritis in the correct kaalapramana, bringing out the ragabhava and clarity of the sahitya in the instrument. Her Neraval and swaras were crisp and neat. She played Ninnu cheppa kaarana in Mandari Raga, Ksheera sagara shayana in Devagandhari and a quick Neekela in Devamanohari before a detailed Bilahari raga for Sri Balasubramanya of Muthuswamy Dikshitar. Young N.C. Bharadwaj, was excellent both while following kritis and playing Thani avarthana. Apoorva concluded her concert with Karnaranjani Thillana of Lalgudi Jayaraman which elicited a great round of applause.

2) N J Nandini-Vocal, R.Rahul-Violin, Sumesh Narayan-Mridanga

Kum. NJ Nandini of Thiruvananthapuram (granddaughter of Vechur Harihara Subramanya Iyer and disciple of Parassala Ponnammal), with her excellent well trained voice began her scholarly concert with Thyagaraja’s Kriti Evarani in Devamrithavarshini, a janya of Kharaharapriya with panchama varjya in Arohana and vakra prayoga Ni Dha Ni Sa. Another Vilamba kala Kriti in Mayamalavagoula “Merusamana” with Neraval and brisk Swaras, she proved her control over laya and mastery over the technique of swarakalpana rendering. She next presented Swati Tirunal’s Padavarnam “Suma Sayaka” in Vilamba Roopaka Tala, which has ragamalika Ethugade swaras. Sharavanabhava in Pashupathipriya raga of Muthaiah Bhagavathar was a fast number. Her detailed Poorvikalyani Raga was followed by Ninnuvina of Sri Shyama Sastry in Mishra chapu tala. Neraval and Swaras were really enjoyable. Rahul (disciple of Vidwan M Chandrasekaran) on the Violin and Sumesh Narayan (disciple of Vidwan Bhaktavatsalam) on the Mridanga gave able support. Sagara shayana Vibho in Bageshri, Panimathi in Ahiri and Tillana in raga Tillong were concluding pieces.

20th May, 2014

1) Vivek Sadashivam-Vocal, Adithya M.P-Violin, Trichy Arvind-Mridanga

Sami Ninne in Sree Raga gave a good start to Vivek’s Concert. He continued with Ekadantam of Muthuswamy Dikshitar in Khanda Chapu Tala and Sri.Thyagaraja’s Vadera in Pantuvarali with raga and swara. Samana Rahithe in Raga Saranga Tarangini, a fine composition of GNB was very well rendered and well received. His rendering of Thodi which was the main attraction of the concert, with a Lalgudi Pancharatna Kriti Gathi Neevani (Saint Thyagaraja’s composition) was very scholarly.
rendered with a mature Neraval and Kalpana Swaras. Thani avarthana by Arvind was excellent. Adithya gave a very good support on the Violin. He concluded his concert with Kandena Govindana in Mishra Maand.

2) Sriranjani Santhagopalan-Vocal, Rajiv M-Violin, Arjun Ganesh-Mridanga

Kum. Sriranjani daughter and disciple of Vidwan Neyveli Santhanagopalan gave a highly energetic and delectable performance. After the Saveri Varna, she rendered a brilliant Saraswathi Manohari Raga for the Thyagaraja’s composition Enthavedukondhu Raghava. She enhanced the beauty of the Kriti by swaras with excellent ease and creativity. After a pleasing Hemavathi Raga she rendered Sri Kanthimathim of Muthuswamy Dikshitar. Paridanamicchithe in Bilahari was rendered in a very fast tempo which did not match with the spirit of the kriti. Dhanyasi was dealt with in an elaborate manner bringing out the ragabhava in all its hues. Meenalochana of Sri. Shyama Sastry was an excellent choice and she did full justice to the kriti by adding perfect Neraval and Kalpana Swara Patterns. At such an young age, she has attained the perfection of a great performer. She was ably supported on the Violin by Rajiv M (disciple of Vidushi Kanyakumari) and on the Mridanga by Arjun Ganesh (disciple of Pungulam Sri Sabesha Iyer and Pungulam Sri Subramanyam).

21st May, 2014

1) M.B.Ramya-Veena, Vinod Shyam-Mridanga

Kum. Ramya, a disciple of Vid. Padmavathy, started with a Varnam in Raga Vasanthanam followed by Purandaradasa’s Jaya jaya in Raga Nata. After a brief Pantuvarali Raga, she presented Appa rama bhakti with neat Neraval and Swaras. Muthuswamy Dikshitar’s Sree Lakshmi Varaham in Abhogi preceded the main Shankarabharananam Raga Alapana. Her technique of playing Veena was sounding as good as vocal. The Kriti Enduku peddala of Thyagaraja was good with Neraval and Swaras. Vinod Shyam, son and disciple of Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma gave an excellent support to the Veena which requires very soft strokes. His Thani was very well appreciated by the audience. Ramya concluded the concert with a Tillana in Kamach and Thiruppugal.

2) Vinay Sharva-Vocal, Kartik- Violin, BS Prashanth-Mridanga

Vinay Sharva, a disciple of Vid. S.Shanckar and Vid. Nedanuri Krishnamurthy, opened the concert with a Saveri Varna. A brief Raga of Begada was a prelude to Muthuswamy Dikshitar Vallabha Nayakasya. A majestic kriti Brovavamma in Manji Raga of Sri. Shyama Sastry was rendered in a mature manner. Devagandhari Kriti of Saint Thyagaraja Naamoralagimpa followed this before he took up a detailed rendering of Raga Thodi for the Kriti Kaddanuvariki. He presented a wonderful elaboration on the Neraval along with profound set of swaras. Kartik, son of well known Violinist Mysore Nagaraj, on the Violin proved his mettle by providing excellent accompaniment and his rendering of Thodi Raga was very good. BS Prashanth, a disciple of Patri Satish Kumar, gave very good support on the Mridanga.

22nd May, 2014

1) Herambha & Hemantha-Flute, Dinesh Kumar-Violin, Sunil Subramanya-Mridanga

Twin wonder, Hemantha and Herambha gave a melodious flute recital starting with Varna Sarasuda in Saveri. The Ethugade Swaras were rendered in two speeds of Thrishra Gathi also. Their tonal purity and their demonstration of different gamakas while playing even fast phrases proved beyond doubt, their mastery over their instruments. Rama nee pai in Kedara was followed by a nice Poorvikalyani raga alapana for the kriti Gnanamosagarada. Dinesh Kumar’s rendering of Raga and swara kalpana on the violin made the concert more enjoyable. Shankarabharana was the highlight of the concert. They chose the Kriti Enduku peddala of Saint Thyagaraja in Adi Tala Vilamba Kala. With very good manodharma, fine blowing technique and a good grip over the laya intricacies, the young artistes are sure to scale new heights in the field of music. The audience thoroughly enjoyed the concert and also the thani played by Sunil Subramanya (disciple of Arjun Kumar).
Purandhara Dasa’s Jagadoddarana was the concluding piece.

2) Shradda Mohan-Vocal, Sindhu Suchetan- Violin, Kishore R-Mridanga

Shradda opened her concert with a Mandari Varna Vanajaksha. Sogasuga mridanga Talamu in Sriranjani Raga had a neat round of Kalpana Swaras with excellent support from Sindhu on the Violin. The next was Meenalochana of Sri. Shyama Sastry in Dhanyasi with Neraval and Swara. Shankarabharana was the main raga and the Kriti Shankaracharyam was full of emotional appeal. after a great Thani by R. Kishore, Shradda concluded her concert with a Tamil song in Sindhu Bhairavi on Lord Muruga.

23rd May, 2014.

1) Ashwathanarayana-Vocal, Vittal Rangan-Violin, Akshay Ram-Mridanga

Ashwathanarayana, a disciple of Vid. late K.V Narayana Swamy is presently under the tutelage of Vid. Padma Narayanaswamy. He chose Chalamela Varna in Natakuranji raga. His voice and style of singing had the stamp of veteran musician K.V.N. The Kritis Nadasudarasam in Aarabhi, Devadeva Jagadeeshwara in Poorvi Kalyani and Sarasija Nabha sodari in Naga Gandhari were presented neatly. Despite a sore throat he did full justice to the raga Kharaharapriya and presented Papanasam Sivan's Kriti Srinivasa Tava Charanam in all its glory. Vittal Rangan, an accomplished disciple of Vid. A Kanyakumari who provided excellent accompaniment on Violin was chosen for the Kalavanta 2014 award for the best violin accompaniment. Akshay Ram, a disciple of Sri. Umayalapuram Sivaraman, provided excellent support on Mridanga. He concluded the concert with a Thiruppavai in Raga Behag.

2) Manda Prathyusha Shruthi Ravali-Vocal, S.N.Smitha-Violin, B.S.Raghavan-Mridanga

Shruthi Ravali of Vizag trained by her mother Vid. Sudha Rani, began her concert with a composition of Swathi Tirunal in Vakulabharanam. She continued with Vasudevacharya’s famous kriti Ra Ra Rajeevalochana and Sri. Thyagaraja’s Sogas jugutharama in Kannada goula. She rendered Niroshtha raga for the kriti Raja Rajaaradheethe (composed by Muthiah Bhagavathar) consisting of only 4 vikriti swaras Ri Ga Dha and Ni and panchama varjya. It was a good attempt by her as singing such ragas is not easy like walking on a firm ground, but like a tight rope walk in the air, that requires lot of balancing. The raga does not give any scope for detailed exposition. So, the different phrases tend to get repeated. Smitha’s violin was commendable. Mamava Meenakshi in Varali was chosen for the detailed exposition. B.S Raghavan, a disciple of Patri Sathish Kumar, gave good support for the entire concert and also presented a fine Thani in Mishra Chapu Tala. A Javali in Kapi raga was the concluding piece.

24th May, 2014

1) Soumya Sridhar-Vocal, Sangeetha-Violin, Adamya-Mridanga

Soumya Sridhar from Hyderabad started with Saint Thyagaraja’s Kriti Sri Raghukula in Hamsadhwani. Endowed with a very sweet voice, she sang Maaravairi ramani in Nasika bhushani Raga a nice composition of Saint Thyagaraja. After Emaninne in Mukhari, a composition of Sri. Subbaraya Sastry in Vilamba kala, a quick Nee Paadamethi Gathi of GNB in Nalinakanthi followed. Purandaradasa’s Keertane Palisemma in Sriranjani was enjoyable. For the detailed raga Shubhapanthuvarali was chosen. The Kriti Ennalu Oorake a composition of Saint Thyagaraja in Mishra Chapu Tala with Neraval and Swaras was very neatly presented. Sangeetha, a disciple of H.K Narasimha Murthy and Adamya, a disciple of Umayalapuram Sivaraman, provided good support on the Violin and Mridanga respectively. The concert concluded with Purandaradasa’s Keertane Maanaheenarige in raga Sahana.

2) Priyanka Prakash-Vocal, Pappu Gnanadev-Vocal, L. Subramanyam-Mridanga

The concluding concert of Kalavanta 2014 was by Priyanka Prakash, a student of Kala Acharya Smt. Neela Ramagopal. She started with Kalyani Varna Vanajakshi followed by Aragimpave in Todi a composition of Saint Thyagaraja. She sang Muthuswamy Dikshitar’s Veena bheri in raga Aabheri with shuddha daivata as per the old school of thought. She elaborately sang Shanmukhapriya
raga for the Kriti Vaddane vaaru. Pappu Gnanadev’s violin performance was excellent. She also sang in detail the raga Kedara goulia for the Kriti Saragunapalimpa with neraval and swaras. Thani by L. Subramanyam, a disciple of Vidwan KS Kalidas was very good. She concluded with a fine Devaranama of Kanakadasa in Bageshri Raga.

To conclude, the entire music programme conducted by KFAC was a resounding success, benefiting both the artistes and the audience. While this is first of its kind, Organisers will do well to retrospect and raise the standard higher next time around. Quite a few varnas, kritis were a repetition that could have been easily avoided.

********

Pazhani Shri Subramaniya Pillai

The Pole star of Laya Universe

Many artistes choose art to add to their glory.
Only through a very few artistes ART chooses to express its own glory.  
Pazhani Subramaniya Pillai is one such rate expression of ART.

Friday, 4th July 2014, 6 pm
(Indian Institute of World Culture, BP Wadia Road, Basavanagudi, Bangalore)

DVD Titled Pazhani Shri Subramaniya Pillai: Pole star of laya Universe will be released on 4th July at Indian Institute of World Culture. The DVD will also be screened as part of the release. The DVD analyses the mastery of the Mridangam legend over laya. It unfurls the story through his thani avarthanam as well as performance as accompaniment for masters like GNB, Ariyakudi, Madurai Mani Iyer, Semmangudi etc. His own disciples like Vid. Trichy Sankaran, Vid. KS Kalidas, grand disciples, veteran musicians and scholars like Vid. Vedavalli, Vid. BM Sundaram etc. narrate with awe the sublime beauty and inimitable majesty of this master craftsman.

Shri. KS Kalidas, direct disciple of the legend is providing this DVD as a samarpanam to his pujya guru with humility and devotion. A retired engineer from Indian Railway Services Shri. KS Kalidas is on a mission to spread the glorious bhani of his guru and the legend Palani.

Awards and Recognitions

Over the years, several artistes and rasikas have instituted endowments with “Sri Krishna Gana Sabha”, Chennai for propagating and encouraging young talent in fine arts. Following artistes from Bangalore are the noteworthy winners for excellence during 58th Gokulashtami Sangeetha Utsavam held during 2013 (Awards announced recently).

Priyanka C Prakash
Sri. DK Jayarama award for Vocal

Akshay Anand
Sri. Gopalarachi’s Endowment award for Mridanga

Sunad Aanoor
Sri TA Harihara Sharma Endowment award for Kanjari
A packed house at SRLKM witnessed a wonderful Veena concert by Sri Ramana Balachandra. It was hard to imagine that this nice a Naada can emanate from a boy so young. His sweet announcements of every composition and even the ragas that he would be playing in the Ragamalika of the Pallavi were very endearing.

He seems to follow the Gayaki style of Veena playing.

He started with the Kaanada Ata Thala Varnam Neranamithi and followed with Mutthuswamy Dikshitar Ganapati Kriti "Siddhivinayakam" in Chamaram (announced as Shanmukhapriya). He played Kalpana Swaras at "Prasiddha Gana Nayakam". This followed with a Kriti of Saint Tyagaraja, "Kripa Juochutaku" in Chayatarangini". A short Anandabhairavi Alapana was followed by Sri. Syama Shasrty's kriti "O Jagadamba". Anandamrithakarshini in Amrutavarshini came as a refreshing filler. A majestic Thodi, a Raga that is normally not elaborated on the Veena for fear of the innumerable gamakas was handled by Ramana with great ease and poise. "Dasharathe", a Tyagaraja Kriti was the sub-main for the evening. After a brisk Anupamagunabudhi Ramana chose Keeravani for the Raga Thana and Pallavi. A good mix of melodious, light and heavy Ragas like Madhuvanthi, Begada, Chandrakauns, Kedaragowla and Saranga were presented in the Thana And swaras. He also sang the Pallavi which had the lyrics "Govinda Alarmel Mangai Manaala Vaa, Thiruvanakuta naatha" set to Khanda Jati Triputa Thala. Chetan Murthy on the Mridanga was very encouraging of Ramana’s playing and contributed his mite to the success of the concert.

After a very encouraging speech by Sri G.V Krishnaprasad where he urged all the Sabhas to take notice of a prodigious talent like this, Ramana concluded his concert with Baro Krishnayya and Sri Lalgudi Jayaraman’s Yamuna Kalyani Tillana.

The full house at the venue and the number of people watching the webcast of the concert on live.shaale.com bore testimony to the fact that a good Veena concert does have many takers. Those of you who missed it please make sure you watch the concert at http://new.livestream.com/shaalelive/06apr2014

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CHANGING SOUNDCAPES
History and evolution of audio Recording in india

Credits
Conceived by R.T. Chari
Research, Script & Narration by Vikram Sampath
Photos Courtesy Vikram Sampath & Kushal Gopalka
Sponsored by TAG Corporation
Executed by Compuprint
The earliest known device for recording sound was the Phonoautograph. For the first time, human beings were able to see ‘sound pictures’ of one’s voice. These were mechanical recording and reproduction techniques.

1877: The ‘Wizard of Menlo Park’, American inventor Thomas Alva Edison made the first successful experimentation of recording sound on his device called the Phonograph. On a tin sheet wrapped over a rotating drum, sound waves were engraved with a stylus attached to a vibrating diaphragm. There were no microphones and amplifiers as this was the ‘Acoustic era’ of recording. The speaker had to yell into a recording horn and channelize all the sound waves onto the diaphragm which then vibrated the stylus and etched patterns on the tin sheet. To hear the sound back, the stylus was passed over the cylinder which would rotate at a uniform speed (60 RPM). Quality of the sound, lifetime of the recording and production of multiple copies was not possible with this Tin-Foil Phonograph.

Alexander Graham Bell decided to enhance Edison’s discovery and filled wax on the spiral groove on the rotating drum. This created the Wax Cylinders which yielded much better performance. Wax Cylinders became very popular in India starting the 1890s. Swami Vivekananda was recorded at the Mysore Palace by Maharaja Chamaraja Wodeyar. Rabindranath Tagore established a private literary club at his Calcutta home in 1896 where ‘Listening to the Phonograph’ was an item on the agenda! Pt. Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande captured voices of several musicians across India with the phonograph.

1888: Foundation of the Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. (GTL) in London as an official syndicated firm. Arrangements were made for manufacture of gramophones, records and assembly of the machines in Germany. Recording expeditions sent all over the world to record ‘native’ voices. Many Indian recording companies were started and several people recorded several people recording expeditions were sent across India between 1902 and 1908. Edward Pelham Reginald to record local musicians. The celebrated courtesan of the city Miss Gauhar Jaan became the first Indian musician and woman to record commercially on the Gramophone. She cut close to 600 records in about 10 – 12 languages, including Tamil and Telugu!

1902: Frederick William Gaisberg of GTL came to the Indian capital of Calcutta to record local musicians. The celebrated courtesan of the city Miss Gauhar Jaan became the first Indian musician and woman to record commercially on the Gramophone. She cut close to 600 records in about 10 – 12 languages, including Tamil and Telugu!

Frederick William Gaisberg
Miss Gauhar Jaan
Kanchipuram
Bangalore
Nagaratnamma
Salem Papa
Salem Ammakannu
Pudukottai Narayanaswamy Iyer
Govindasamy Dasu’s Band
Vaidyanatha Iyer

1904: Emile Berliner, a German immigrant in America experimented on Edison’s technique and felt that recording on a flat surface by moving the stylus laterally gave better results. This resulted in the first Gramophone record and Berliner thus invented the flat disc format for sound recording. The first trial was a 5 inch diameter made of rubber, later 7 inch diameter Zinc and Shellac records were released as E-Berliner records.

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In the early decades, women artists were the ones who were more open to recording and gave up the fears and superstitions associated with the new technology and came forward to record willingly. Gauhar Jaan, Janki Bai of Allahabad, Zohra Bai of Agra, Binodini Dasi of Calcutta, Bangalore Nagaratnamma, Coimbatore Thayi, Bai Sundara Bai of Pune, Mehboob Jaan of Solapur, Malka Malka of Agra, S.R. Kamalam, Salem Godavari, Tiruchendoor Shanmukhavadivu were some of the early female super-stars of India.

Ustad Abdul Karim Khan, Peara Saheb, Ustad Imdad Khan, Nagaraja Rao (Flute) and Veene Seshanna were some of the male artists who recorded. The 1930s saw the coming of sound in films. Madras was the prime centre for South Indian cinema. H.M. Reddi’s ‘Kalidas’ in 1931 with T.P. Rajakshmi in the lead saw the advent of ‘talking’ films. Films and their songs became another major medium for spreading patriotic zeal.

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Many rival companies came to India to seek the market here, but the Gramophone Company (known by its label name of His Master’s Voice or HMV) emerged the winners. The Gramophone records were all of 3 minutes duration only. Artists had to compress their rendition in this limited span and also announce their names at the end of the recording. Many rival companies came to India to seek the market here, but the Gramophone Company (known by its label name of His Master’s Voice or HMV) emerged the winners.

Electrical recording replaced Acoustic recording was introduced in Britain using the Western Electrical Systems. This helped amplify sound patterns to any degree. By the late 1920s and 1930s several artists, aided by the microphone, began to record without any inhibition. The 78 RPM gramophone discs of artists like Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, Musiri Subramania Iyer, G.N. Balasubrahmaniam, M.S. Subbulakshmi, K.B. Sundarambal, K. V. Subba Rao (Flute) and Veene Seshanna were some of the artists who recorded. The 1930s saw the coming of sound in films. Madras was the prime centre for South Indian cinema. H.M. Reddi’s ‘Kalidas’ in 1931 with T.P. Rajakshmi in the lead saw the advent of ‘talking’ films. Films and their songs became another major medium for spreading patriotic zeal.

Records also became a medium for social and political transformations—women and downtrodden castes. Radio Broadcasting, as an offshoot of the Electrical revolution, was pioneered in India in 1924. But this wound up in about 3 years. By 1932, the British Government took over the broadcasting, and All India Radio was established.

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1931 : The Gramophone Company Ltd and Columbia Graphophone Company Ltd merged to form Electrical and Musical Industries (EMI). Stereo recording and reproduction was patented.
The advent in the recording of music opened up a whole new world for the music lovers. With the introduction of various recording methods and media, the music industry witnessed a significant transformation. The shift from acoustic recordings to electrically recorded tapes was a major milestone in the evolution of music reproduction.

1950 – 1960:

- **Magnetic Wire Spools**: In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Magnetic Wire spools and Tape spools became the new medium for recording music, replacing the conventional 78 rpm records.
- **Vinyl Records**: The use of vinyl records became more widespread, and the 12-inch long-playing (LP) record gained popularity due to its better sound quality.
- **Magnetic Tapes**: The advent of magnetic tape recording technology allowed for more affordable and portable recording options.
- **Magnetic Cassettes**: In 1966, EMI released its first pre-recorded Cassettes, marking the beginning of the 'compact cassette' culture.

1960 – 1970:

- **Digital Recording**: With the advancement of science, unspooling magnetic tapes became a reality, leading to the introduction of digital recording technology.
- **Multi-Track Recording**: The use of multiple microphones and studio environments allowed for the creation of complex arrangements.
- **Western Influence**: Western musical influences gave 70 mm stereophonic strokes to the Indian music, with the 'technicolor' films introducing western elements to traditional Indian music.

1970 – 1980:

- **Digital Age**: The digital age brought with it new recording technologies, such as digital audio tape (DAT) and compact discs (CDs), offering superior sound quality.
- **Live Performances**: Many live performances were recorded and distributed as recordings, enhancing the audience experience.
- **Acoustic Band**: Artists like Pt. Ravi Shankar and Ustad Ali Akbar Khan introduced Indian classical music to the world through televised performances.

1980 – 1990:

- **Compact Discs**: In 1986, the first Compact Disc or CD Factory came up in India, marking the beginning of the CD era.
- **Satellite TV**: The advent of satellite TV and multiple cable networks changed the whole entertainment landscape.

1990 – 2000 and onwards:

- **CDs, DVDs, and Digital Downloads**: The music industry continued to evolve with the introduction of CDs, DVDs, and digital downloads, offering a wide range of accessibility.
- **Online Streaming**: The rise of online streaming services like Spotify and Apple Music revolutionized the way people consumed music.

The evolution of music recording technology has been a continuous process, driven by advancements in technology and changing consumer preferences. From the phonograph to the compact disc, each innovation has brought about a new wave of music appreciation and consumption. The future of music is likely to be shaped by emerging technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR), offering new ways for audiences to connect with their favorite music.
Ever since the beginning of time, the five basic elements or panchabhootas - earth, water, fire, air and ether have been worshipped by man. The entire creation is made of these elements. Without the functions of these elements, this world would never exist. The five elements make up the physical body of man, permeate his consciousness and are responsible for his various functions. These in turn activate the five subtle elements (tanmatras) of smell, taste, form, touch and sound and the five organs of action (karmendriyas).

The five Shiva kshetras situated in South India are sacred centres of pilgrimage of the Hindus. These holy places represent the five primal elements of nature. Lord Shiva himself manifests as these five elements. Ekamreshwara of Kanchipuram represents Prithvi (earth), Jambukeshwara of Tiruvanaikkaval represents Ap (water), Arunachaleshwara of Tiruvannamalai abides as Tejas (fire), Kalahastishwara symbolises Vayu (air) and Nataraja represents the akasha tatva (ether) at Chidambaram.

Muthuswami Dikshitar, the pilgrim composer, visited all the five shrines during his voyages and composed wonderful kritis on each of them, which besides being extremely rich in devotion to Lord Shiva, are awe-inspiring compositions of unsurpassed melody and lyrical beauty. He has also described the temples and the sthala puranas in a capsulated form in these compositions. Of these, Chidambaram (and the presiding deity Nataraja) have been sung by innumerable composers in hundreds of songs. But, it is noteworthy that most Carnatic music composers have not sung in praise of the other four deities, except of course, Muthuswami Dikshitar. This makes Dikshitar's Panchalinga Sthala Kritis very significant.

1. PrithviLinga (Kshetra-Kanchipuram, Kriti–Chintayama kanda, Raga-Bhairavi)

Kanchipuram in North Tamil Nadu is a great seat of religion, culture and education. It is hailed as “Nagareshu Kanchi”, the best among cities. The principal deity of Kanchipuram is Kamakshi and the deities of all the shrines in Kanchipuram face her temple. The Linga which is believed to be made of sand by Goddess Parvathi herself is the prithvi linga – that is the central deity of Ekamreshwara temple here. Ekamreshwara means Lord of the solitary mango, which is the sthala vruksha.

Dikshitar was invited to Kanchipuram by a great yogi, Sri Upanishad Brahmam, and stayed with him for a few years studying Vedanta. This was when he composed the beautiful bhairvi kriti ‘Chintayama kanda mulakandam’ as a tribute to the prithvi linga.

Special references to earth

The opening line of the kriti has the word kanda twice (kanda mulakandam). ‘Kanda’ means root, which grows inside the soil and penetrates the earth. Similarly, the anupallavi has the line ‘samrajyaprada’-bestowing empires. The term samrajya or empire is temporal and of the earth. But, when a spiritually evolved person like Dikshitar uses the word samrajya, he most probably means moksha samrajya, the kingdom of liberation, which is the true kingdom to be gained. Nevertheless, the innate ignorance, the sadhana for its elimination and the consequent liberation i.e., moksha is for inhabitants of the earth. Therefore, Dikshitar’s usage of samrajyaprada in the kriti dedicated to the earth element is quite appropriate. Later, the Lord is described as the slayer of death (antaka sudana).
Death again is for the inhabitants of the earth. The last line of the charanam refers to the prithvi linga.


Tiruchirappali or Trichy, as it is called now, is at the geographical centre of the state of Tamilnadu and is a great pilgrim centre. Here is situated the temple dedicated to Lord Jambukeshwara and Goddess Akhilandeshwari. A forest of Jambu trees existed near a tank here and Lord Shiva is said to have manifested under one of the trees as a Linga. The sthala vruksha is the jambu tree and hence the name Jambukeshvaram for the place itself. The Puranas say that Goddess Parvati made a linga out of water particles and worshipped it here. Water is always present in the inner shrine of Lord Jambukeshwara even during peak summer testifying to the nature of the element the Lord represents here.

Dikshitar often visited his daughter’s house in Trichy. He composed the ap linga kriti ‘Jambupathe’ in the raga Yamuna Kalyani. The music world is grateful to Dikshitar for giving unto it such a sublime, soulful work, a work of such exquisite aesthetic beauty that it is impossible not to be moved by it. And the way he has utilised a North Indian raga for a major kriti defies description.

Special references to water

The pallavi of the kriti asks the Lord to give the devotee the nectar of true bliss (nijanandamruta bodham). Amruta or nectar is a fluid. The anupallavi begins with a reference to Brahma, seated on a lotus that is born out of water (ambujasanadi). Later, the anupallavi says that the Lord quenches the fires that rage in the heart (hrudayatapopashamana), which is an indirect reference to water, for it is only water that can douse fire. The next line says that the deity is the Lord of the sea and of the rivers Ganga, Kaveri, Yamuna. Dikshitar further says that Shiva is the Lord of Goddess Akhilandeshwari whose throat is akin to conch. (kambu kanti akhilandeswari ramana). Conch is born out of water. The charanar refers to the Lord as ap linga, as an ocean of nectar of compassion (karunasudhasindho) and as one bearing the Ganga in his locks (nityamauli vidhruta gangendo). The raga name itself has an association with rivers. This composition has the maximum number of references to the element in concern among the five and is noted for its alliterative beauty especially in the charanam. The ending words, vibho, prabho, shambho, swayambho, sindho, bandho, bindho, gangendo, etc., testify to Dikshitar’s command of the language as well as his poetic genius.

3. Tejo Linga (Kshetra–Tiruvannamalai, Kriti–Arunachalanatham, Raga-Saranga)

Arunachala is one of the oldest and most sacred of India’s holy places. Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, the Sage of Arunachala, declared it to be the heart of the earth, the spiritual centre of the world. Arunachala is called Tiruvannamalai, the hill which cannot be reached, in Tamil. The Shiva linga here is a manifestation of fire. Linga worship is supposed to have begun here. The temple is one of the largest in India. The pradakshina of circumambulation of the hill is considered the most important form of worship to the Lord.

Muthuswami Dikshitar visited Tiruvannamalai of such glory on his way from Kanchipuram to Tiruvarur. ‘Arunachalanatham’ is one of his most important songs and celebrates the Tejolinga.

Special references to fire

The opening line refers to the Lord as ‘Arunachalanatham’. ‘Aruna’ is associated with the light of the morning sun. The anupallavi says that the Lord is like a million suns at the dawn (tarunadityakoti). The charanam says the deity is a radiant linga (tejomayalingam). It goes on to say that in his effulgent locks (swapradeepamauli) he holds Ganga and that his brightness excels that of the sun, the moon and fire (swaprakashajita somagnipatangam). Also, among the many meanings of the word ‘Saranga’, are two that are relevant to the kriti – camphor (easily inflammable) and light. Interestingly, the letter ‘ra’ refers to agni and there is a lot of usage of ‘ra’ throughout the song.

4. Vayu Linga (Kshetra–Kalahasti, Kriti–Sri Kalahastisha, Raga-Huseni)

This is the only panchabhuoota kshetra outside Tamil Nadu state. Situate in Andhra Pradesh near
Tirupati, Kalahasti is one of the most sacred Shaivite shrines. The vayu linga is housed in a vast temple that abounds in sculptural wealth adjacent to the hill on the banks of the river Swarnamukhi. In the inner sanctum, there is a lamp which keeps flickering signifying the air element.

Dikshitar visited Kalahasti during the time he lived at Manali near Madras and composed ‘Sri Kalahastisha’. For this kriti again, Dikshitar has utilized a raga that does not offer much scope. Nevertheless, the genius that he was, Dikshitar has coaxed the maximum melody from Huseni.

Special references to air

In the pallavi, The lord is described as a zephyr for those seeking refuge in him (shritajanavanasameerakara). The anupallavi further describes the Lord as the life breath of Indra, Brahma and Vishnu (pakarividhiharipranamayakosha) and as radiating through the five elements (anila akasha bhumi salila agni prakasha).

5. Akasha Linga (Kshetra–Chidambaram, Kriti–Ananda Natana prakasham, Raga-Kedara)

The confluence of great art, vibrant religion and esoteric philosophy; the meeting point of great artists, poets, sages and the Gods; Chidambaram is the only place on earth that can boast of all this and more. It is one of the very rare shrines where Shiva can be worshipped in human form in the inner sanctum itself and where the moola moorti itself is the utsava moorti too. In all other shrines, Shiva is represented only by the Linga.

The panchaloha idol of Lord Nataraja is a beautifully sculpted piece and is the zenith of art. It reveals the power of the Lord as marvellously as it projects his joyous Ananda Tandava. The symmetry of the arms, legs and body, dancing with perfect rhythm, coupled with the expression of joy, confidence, valour, peace, sublimity and infinite compassion on the face, present a picture of the greatest artist and the supreme dancer. The Chitsabha which is graced by the dancing Nataraja idol is the inner most sanctum of the temple and the Kanakasabha is a mantapa situated just in front of the Chitsabha.

Dikshitar came to Chidambaram on his way from Tiruvannamalai to Tiruvarur and stayed there for a few days. Of the several kritis he composed here, the most important is the one, which specifically refers to the akasha tattva and describes the esoteric significance of the place and the dancing Lord – ‘Ananda Natana prakasham’.

Special references to Akasha

The element here is space or ether which signifies Consciousness, which encompasses all other elements and is the most difficult to comprehend due to its formlessness. The composer treats the subject accordingly. The deity here is the Lord of the cosmic hall (chitsabhesham). He is dazzling like a million suns (bhanukotisankasham), the sun being a celestial object in space. The Lord is Cosmic Consciousness who grants well-being and salvation (bhuktimuktiprada daharaakasham). The charanam begins with two celestials who occupy the Lord’s matted locks, the moon which is high up in the sky and Ganga who descended from the heavens (sheetamshugangadharam). His whole being is Consciousness (Chidambaram). The entire creation emanated from Consciousness or space and space existed before all creation. The Lord is appropriately described so (vishveshvaram, adyam). Consciousness is ever present (aprameyam) and this pure space is the import of advaitic philosophy (advaita pratipadyam). Space stimulates the remaining elements thereby causing creation (bahutaraabhedachodyam).

Conclusion

It is the one and only Lord Shiva who manifests as all the five elements in order to emphasise the ultimate truth that he is the Self in all. Different manifestations are only required to cater to the different perceptions of bhaktas. In this way, Dikshitar, a truly enlightened being and a realised soul, brings out the inherent relationship between Advaita philosophy and polytheistic worship. It is beyond doubt that his Panchalinga Sthala kritis underlie the fact that the essence in all is the same and all are but manifestations of the Supreme being.

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Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira organized a rare vocal trio concert by veteran vocalist Vidwan Malladi Suribabu and his sons, Vidwan Sreeramprasad and Vidwan Ravikumar as part of its annual day celebrations. They were accompanied by Vidwan S Varadarajan on the violin, Vidwan Mannargudi A Easwaran on the mridangam and Vidwan Phanindra Bhaskar on the ghatam. Rasikas were treated to a number of rare gems from their vast repertoire of compositions. Jalajaksha, a lilting varnam in Asaveri, a composition of Lalgudi G Jayaraman was sung with aplomb. Thyagaraja’s Nenendu vedakudura in Karnataka Behag was presented emotively with a spurt of wonderfully woven swaraprastharas at hari nenegro vedakudura with equally creative responses from seasoned violinist Vidwan Varadarajan. The famous kriti of Ponniah Pillai – Ranganathude in Sowrashtra was presented with brief swaraprastharas. Malladi Sri Suribabu presented a bhava-laden Dhanyasi alapana with vintage phrases, beautifully capturing the essence of the raga. Thyagaraja’s Ni chittamu was the kriti that followed with a wonderful neraval at Gurude uttama gathi. The masterful accompaniment on the mridangam by the maestro Vidwan Sri Easwaran was a connoisseur’s delight indeed! A rare composition in Kalyani (Mathim dehi) of Vanamalai Jeer Swami, Mysore Sadashiva Rao’s Ninnuvina gati in Balahamsa and Thyagaraja’s lesser known kriti in Phalaranjani, Sri Narasimha were presented in scholarly fashion. The piece de resistance of the concert was an evocative and creatively brilliant Kambodhi by both the brothers and was followed by a riveting alapane by Vidwan Varadarajan. Mysore Vasudevacharya’s masterpiece Mari mari vaccuna was the kriti rendered and was embellished with neraval and swaras. The thani avartanam by Vidwan Easwaran and Vidwan Phanindra Bhaskar capped a wonderful evening for the large gathering of rasikas. A viruttam was sung with bhava followed by a Devaranama, Kande govindana in Maand. The gripping padam of Kshetragna in Suruti Indendu Vachitivira signed off what was a wonderful evening of sublime music.

**Special vocal trio concert by the Malladi family - A report**

Vidwan Ashwin Anand

Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira will present an advanced workshop on Ragam, Tanam and Pallavi singing by Vid. Ranjani and Vid. Gayatri. The one workshop is scheduled for August 03, 2014. The venue will be the Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira auditorium. Those who are able to sing Ragam, Neraval and Swaram only are eligible. Interested candidates may register by sending their profile directly to Mr. Krishnaprasad at "srlkmandira@gmail.com".

This is a great opportunity for advanced students of music to learn the intricacies of RTP singing. Mr. Krishnaprasad can be contacted at 080-26710766 for more details.

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**Sunday, Aug 03, 2014 (10 am to 05 pm)**

Ragam, Thanam and Pallavi - Workshop by Vidushi’s Ranjani and Gayatri

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Lalitha Kala Tharangini - July 2014
Ashwathnarayanan, as if it were a tribute to the legendary vocalist MS, rendered two kritis that have been made immortal by her. The lovely Annamacharya kriti in raga Lalita “Natanala Brahmyaku” and the mellow, sedate “Bhogheendra Shayinam” in Kuntalavarali raga. Without taking away the spirit of their original renditions, Ashwathnarayanan brought his own into it, like a competent musician would do.

His alapane for Simhendramadhyama was rich with ideas, Ashwathnarayanan’s voice brought out the raga bhava complemented with a chaste Carnatic idiom. In this delineation which stretched to a considerable length of time, he never sounded repetitive; it was a well thought-out and detailed piece. Apoorva added to what Ashwathnarayanan had built; in a meditative exposition, Apoorva’s flourishes had the Lalgudi touch to it – the double string effect, the subtle dissonances etc all. He rendered Mysore Vasudevacharya’s kriti “Ninne Nammiti Naiya” replete with complex sangatis and the neraval at “Pannagendra Shayana” was robust, yet never lost the devotion of the kriti. A torrential swara prastara and a tani by Akshay Anand took the piece to its crescendo. Akshay’s fine artistry carries in it the glimpses of the legends of
percussion, and doesn’t show the temptation of gimmickry.

The concert was indeed a treat. It seemed like one was watching the curtains go up for a new phase of promise in Carnatic music. One hopes that all the three artistes will hold on firmly to their musical values in the days to come.

Photo Courtesy - The Hindu

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14 music concerts in eight days

Bangalore Gayana Samaja on Sunday played host to the inauguration of a National Youth Festival in Carnatic music, “Kalavanta 2014”, brought together by the Karnataka Fine Arts Council (KFAC).

The eight-day festival (May 18-25) with 14 music concerts would bring forth 45 young artistes who would perform and be evaluated for the Kalavanta Award of the year.

“We have made history in Carnatic music with 10 sabhas coming together in the city for promoting youth talent in the country,” said KFAC chairman, M.R.V. Prasad.

One keeps a track of professionals in the mega year-end music season at Chennai. So, Bangalore, we thought, should be the hub for people to gather and sieve the best of youth-talent during the mid-year," he said.

Thus was born KFAC with Gayana Samaja, Ranjani Fine Arts, Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira, BTM Cultural Academy, Ananya Cultural Academy, Nadasurabhi, Sree Guruvayurappan Bhajan Samaj, Bharatiya Samagana Sabha, M.A. Narasimhachar Music Foundation and Vishesha Fine Arts.

KFAC secretary Arvind Brahmakal was was happy his fervent enthusiasm for hosting a cultural bonhomie for the aspiring youth from across the country was well-received by the 10 organisations involved.

While the competitors are here after strict rounds of selection procedures, four senior Carnatic icons would be the judges for the eight-day music affair.

“Malladi Suribabu, father and guru of Malladi Brothers; mridangist A.V. Anand; (retd.) Director, All India Radio, N.S. Krishnamurthy; and star vocalist M.S. Sheela would evaluate the 45 artistes, while audiences too would be involved in the grading,” said Mr. Brahmakal.

The best “Kalavanta” would be awarded Rs. 50,000 in cash, while the best of violin and mridanga accompaniments would be given Rs. 25,000 in cash each,” he said.

Earlier, speaking to The Hindu, Mr. Prasad said, “It costs us nearly Rs. 10 lakh for this eight-day exercise and apart from sponsorships, the 10 sabhas gathered here are sharing expenses. Not just going national, KFAC's 'Kalavanta' will soon be a mid-year hub for patrons across the globe.”

“Most youngsters who are into serious classical music are working professionals these days, and that is what makes this youth festival more special,” said Dr. Krishnamurthy, after formally inaugurating the festival. “Yesteryear star GNB (G.N. Balasubramaniam) was hailed a hero as he was a musician and a graduate. Today, it is working professionals who are performers and it is their energy and passion towards arts that showcase a focussed journey. Let Bangalore mirror these young stars to the world,” he said.
The concert is at the United Nations. The song, ‘Jagadoddharana’ rendered in the heavenly voice of Smt M S Subbulakshmi permeates every corner of the vast auditorium. She is accompanied vocally by Smt Radha Viswanathan. As the audience listens, enthralled and spellbound, they hear a ‘Third voice’ merging with the divine voice of Smt MSS.

The Music Academy resounds with Muttusvami Dikshitar’s immortal ‘Chetasshri balakrishnam’ rendered by Shri Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer in his own inimitable and majestic style. Shri V Subrahmanyam & Shri Palai Ramachandran support him vocally. And every person in the audience is astounded to hear a honeyed ‘Fourth Voice’.

At Kalakshetra, the audience is in a trance, listening to the soulful rendition of ‘Varugalamo’, by Shri K V Narayanaswamy. Vocal support is being provided by Smt Padma Narayanaswamy. Even in that state of trance, the audience is able to hear the silken ‘Third Voice’ pulling at the heart strings.

That ‘invisible’ voice belongs to Shri VV Subrahmanyam, whose fingers weave the swirls of musical silk on the strings of the violin, bringing forth that added ‘voice’ in each of these concerts and many more.

A violin player bringing forth a ‘voice’? Yes, in the hands of Shri VVS. His playing is so perfectly tailored to flow along with music of the singer, matching it to every movement and melody, inseparable as the flower and its scent, bringing forth an aural treat that is like hearing a human voice sing along.

Shri VVS being a violinist with incomparable attributes is very well known. The hallmark of his musical acumen is in the fact that he has kept aloft the great tradition of Carnatic music in its most pristine manner. His beautiful handling of the bow, with the ideal grip and control, the dexterous drives with his consummate fingering techniques, his impeccable consciousness of shruti and laya, the myriad hues of the light and shades in the contours of his musical portraits, his all-encompassing skills in manodharma, his research and innovations in shaping the violin tone to heart-warming mellifluousness and his striking grand presence make him a complete musician, undeniably exclusive and simply matchless.

The edge to Shri VVS’ persona goes beyond in him being just an ace violinist or an exemplary musician. The insight into the unknown realms of music that Shri VVS has envisioned is absolutely amazing. His exploration and experience of music in its all-pervading form as Nada, in its multi-various arrangements is eclectic. His ongoing search in the dominions of Nada yoga has
empowered his music glow with added lustre and poise. Shri VVS has brought forth several interpretations of the significance of the seven notes and their various colors, their effects with respect to a musical measure and also their relation and relevance to the human body, the import of the perfect construction of the sahityas of the great vaggeyakaras couched in the perfect tune, the understanding of the emotion of the great composers through their colossal compositions and the presentation of a raga or a composition to enable an experience that transcends to an inexplicable state of ecstasy. His renditions of Vatapi Ganapatim, Sujana jivana and Nannu brovu Lalita, to name a few, are testimony to his wealth of Nadanubhava.

A great teacher, Shri VVS shares with his students, without any reservation, this illustrious wealth of Nadanubhava. Any teaching session will not finish without an exhaustive elucidation of the hidden beauties of our music. Adding to it, Shri VVS will talk about his own concert experiences with various musicians and the kind of challenges and situations that he has encountered. His classes are undoubtedly one of its kinds, aiding the student to have a holistic perspective of our great art.

Awesome appreciation from musicians and music lovers world-wide and awards from premier institutions have adorned Shri VVS. Nevertheless, his plunge into the ocean of Nada continues incessantly to bring forth many a rare gem. As the waves of Nada, that emanate from his violin, intricately designed by his heart and intellect, trigger one's life to bliss, a deep sense of gratitude to the Almighty prevails for having blessed this soul to be a student of Shri VVS forever.

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Forthcoming Programmes

Sunday, August 24, 2014, 5.30 pm

NJ Nandini, disciple of Parasala Ponnammal and granddaughter of Vechur Harihara Subramanya Iyer will be giving a vocal concert at SRLKM, Banashankari on 24th Aug. She will be accompanied by Apoorva Krishna (Kalavantha 2014) on Violin and NC Bharadwaj (Kalavantha 2014) on Mridangam. The venue is SRLKM auditorium and the concert starts at 5.30 pm. All are Welcome.

Sunday, September 14, 2014, 5.30 pm

Begum Parveen Sulthana will be performing for SRLKM on 14 September at the Dental College Auditorium. She will be accompanied by Vyasamurthi Katti on Harmonium and Vishwanath Nakod on Tabla. The venue is RV Dental College auditorium, JP Nagar and the concert starts at 6 pm. All are Welcome.
Kalavantha 2014 - Flashback

Aishwarya Vidya Raghunath-Aditi Krishnaprakash-Akshay Anand

Nandini-R Rahul-Sumesh Narayanan

Apoorva Krishna-NC Bharadwaj

Sriranjini Santanagopalan-M Rajeev-Arjun Ganesh

Vivek Sadasivam-MP Aditya-Trichy Aravind

Ramya-Anoor Vinod Shyam

Vinay Sharva-Mysore N Karthik-BS Prashanth

Karthik Narayanan-KJ Dilip-KH Vineet
Kalavantha 2014 - Flashback

Hemantha-Heramba-Dinesh Kumar-Sunil Subramanya

Shraddha Mohan-Sindhu Suchetan-Kishore

R Ashwathnarayan-Vittal Rangan-Akshay Ram

Manda Sruti Ravali-HM Smitha-VS Raghavan

Soumya Sridhar-Sangeetha-Adamya Ramanand

Priyanka Prakash-Papu Gnanadev-L Subramanyam

A view of the crowd

Abhishek Raghuram-HK Venkatram-Arjun Kumar

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