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2000



SRUTI
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Philadelphia, PA

Saint Thyagaraja

(1767-1847)

The classical music of India has been an integral part of our spiritual heritage. A great many composers have contributed to the rich tradition of Carnatic music which is essentially devotional. The sacred memory of Sri Thyagaraja, the foremost of our saint composers, is honored on the *aradhana* day by thousands of musicians offering tribute to the prolific composer.

A great devotee of Lord Rama, Thyagaraja composed over 2000 songs mostly in Telugu and some in Sanskrit. Simple, beautiful and soul stirring, his style appeals to the layman and the scholar alike. He also wrote two operas *Prahalada Bhakthi Vijayam* and *Nowka Charithram*. The *Ghana Raga Pancharathna Kirtanas* in the 5 ragas Nattai, Gaulai, Arabhi, Sri, and Varali, are considered to be the most scholarly contribution of Thyagaraja to South Indian Music. The composer seems to have condensed his musical genius, his matchless devotion to God and the profound wisdom of the Vedanta teaching into these five immortal kritis. Appropriately enough, the musical offering at the aradhana begins with the singing of the Pancharathna kritis in unison.

[Some books on Thyagaraja: *Spiritual Heritage Of Thyagaraja* by V. Raghavan and C. Ramanujachari., *Tyagaraja-Life and Lyrics* by W.J. Jackson, *Know your Thyagaraja* by S.V.Krishnamurthy.]

Nithyasree-Vocal (1996)
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Vijay Siva-Vocal (1993)
Shriram Kumar (V), J. Vaidhyanathan (M)

S.P. Ramh-Vocal (1994)
Shashidhar (V), Satish Pathakota (M)

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SRUTI Concert Tapes

This is a partial list of the more recent recorded concert tapes that are available for distribution among the patrons of Sruti. To receive any of these tapes and for a complete listing of tapes available, please contact any member of the Library Committee or email your request to viji_swaminathan@hotmail.com. Each concert is on 2 cassettes unless specified otherwise within parentheses. Prices for Sruti members are: \$10 for a two-cassette set and \$15 for a three-cassette set. Non-members should add \$2 to the cost of each set. Please add \$2.00 per set for shipping & handling.

V=Violin,M=Mridangam,G=Ghatam

Mysore Nagaraj and Manjunath -Violin (1999) Thiruvurur
Bhaktavatsalam (M)

Neyveli Santhanagopalan-Vocal (1999)
Delhi Sundararajan (V), Srimushnam
Rajaroo (M)

N. Ramani-Flute (1998)
Srikant Venkataraman (V) Srimushnam Rajaroo (M).

Kadri Gopalanath-Saxophone (1997) Kanyakumari (V), Guruvayur
Durai (M)
T.N. Krishnan & Viji Krishnan Natarajan -Violin (1997)
B. Harikumar (M), Vaikkom R. Gopalakrishnan (G)

Balaji Shankar - vocal (1997)
Ganesh Prasad (V), Poongulam Subramaniam (M)

O.S. Thyagarajan-Vocal (1997) (3)
Srikanth Venkataraman (V), Srimushnam Raja Rao (M)

Shashank-Flute (1996)
Gopinath (V), Satish Kumar (M), Tripunithira Radhakrishnan (G)

Jayanthi & Padmavathi-Veena (1996)

M.S. Sheela-Vocal (1996) (3)
Nalina Mohan (V), Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma (M), Sukanya
Ramgopal (G)

GHANA RÀGA PANCHARATHNA KIRTANAS

Prabhakar Chitrapu

[The alphabets of Telugu and Sanskrit contain letters that do not have a counterpart in the Roman alphabet. Thus I have used the following scheme to denote the extra letters in Telugu. 1) s as in sura, 2) s' as in s'iva, 3) n as in nara, 4) n̄ as in Gañapati, 5) r as in rama, 6) r' as in r'ushi, 7) l as in kalyani, 8) l' as in varaali, 9) t as in nata, 10) th as in Thyagaraja. Furthermore, it is important to clearly distinguish long and short vowels. I have consistently used an accent above the letter to indicate long sounds. Finally, in Telugu, elementary words are often combined to form composite words, through a process called "Sandhi". During this process, a transformation occurs at the junction of the two words, sometimes making it difficult to understand or even pronounce the long composite words. In such cases, I have separated the words by a plus (+) sign. For example, gaganaadhipa is written as gagana+adhipa.
Acknowledgement: The author would like to acknowledge the consultation help given by Sri D. Raghavachary (the elder of the 'Hyderabad Brothers') in translating these compositions.]

1. Nàta Ràga - Àdi Thàla

Jagada+ananda-kàraka Jaya Jànaki Pràna-nàyaka

1. Gagana+adhipa Satkulaja Ràja Ràjeswara
Sugunàkara Sura-sèvyà Bhavya-dàyaka Sada Sakala
2. Amara-thàraka Nichaya-kumuda-hitha Pari-pùrna+anagha
Sura Sura-bhùja Dadhi-payòdhi-vàsa Harana
Sundara-thara Vadana Sudhà-maya Vachò-brunda Gòvinda
Sànanda Māvāra+ajaràpta Subhakara+anèka
3. Nigama Niraja+amruta Poshaka+animisha-vairi
Vàrida Samìrana Khaga-thuranga Satkavi Hrudàlaya Aganitha
Vànara+adhipa Nathàmghri Yuga
4. Indra-nìla-mani Sannibhàpa-ghana Chandra Sùrya-
nayana+apramèya Vågindra Janaka Sakalèsa Subhra Nàgèndra-

sayana Samana-vairi Sannuta

5. Pàda Vijitha Mauni-sàpa Sava Paripàla Vara-mantra Grahana
Lòla Parama Sànta-chittha Janakaja+adhipa Saròja-bhava
Varada+akhila
6. Srushti-sthityanta-kàraka Amita-kàmita Phalada Asamàna Gàthra
Sachipathi Suthàbdhi Sudhàkara Kusuma Vimàna Surasàripu
Karàbja
7. Làlitacharana Avaguna Suragana Mada-harana Sanàtanà-janutha
8. Om-kàra Panjara-kira Purahara Saròjabhava Kèsava+adi Rùpa
Vàsava-ripu Janakànthaka Kalà-dharàpta Ghrunàkara
Saranàgatha Janapàlana Sumanò-ramana Nirvikàra Nigama-sàra-
thara
9. Kara-dhrutha Sarajàla+asura Mada+apaharanà Vanisura
Suràvana Kavina Bilaja Mauni Kruta-charitra Sannuta Sri
Thyàgaràja Sannutha
10. Puràna-purusha Nruvara+athmaja+asritha Para+adhina
Khara-viràdha-ràvana Viràvana Anagha Paràsara Mandhara
Avikruta Thyàgaràja Sannutha



Jagadanandakaraka...

An admiration of God and his infinite manifestations.

'O source of cosmic rejoice, Janaki's beloved, we cheer your victory!
Noble son of the solar race, Lord of the emperors,
You are like the single moon among deathless stars,
You nourish with the nectar of the lotus of the *Veda*
You are the Lord of *Ahalya*--your foot dispelled the rishi's curse,
You are the Cause of creation, preservation and annihilation
You are the moon ascending from the sea of good peoples' minds,
Siva, Brahma, Vishnu incarnate, you are the destroyer of demons--
Khara, Viradha and Ravana,
O Man of many qualities, consort of Lakshmi, Lion to the elephant of
sin, adored by Tyagaraja and others, Bliss giver to the worlds, we
cheer your victory'.



Solutions for Match the Raga on page 19:

1 -d, 2 -g , 3 -e, 4 -i, 5 -m, 6 -a, 7 -s, 8 -o, 9 -f, 10 -r, 11 -c,
12 -b, 13 -j, 14 -p, 15 -q, 16 -t, 17 -k, 18 -l , 19 -h , 20 -n.

Solution for Carnatic Music Crossword on page 20:

2. Gowla Ràga - Àdi Thàla

Dudukù-gala Nannè Dora-koduku Bròchurà Enthò

1. Kadu Durvishaya-krushtudai Gadiya Gadiyaku Nindàru
2. Sri Vanitha Hruthkumudabja Avàng-mànasa Gòchara
3. Sakala Bhùthamula-yandu Nivai-yundagà Madi-lèka-bòyina
4. Chiruta-pràyamula-nàdè Bhajanàmruta Rasavihina Kutarkudaina
5. Paradhanamula-koraku Norula Madi-karaga-balki Kadupu-nimpa Thirigi-natti
6. Thana-madini Bhuvini Saukhyapu Jivanamè Yanuchu Sadà Dinamulu Gadipè
7. Thèliyani Nata-vita-kshudrulu Vanitalu Svavasamauta Kupadisinchi Santasilli Swara-layambu Lerungakanu Silàthmulai Subhaktulaku Samànamanu
8. Dhroshtiki Sàrambagu Lalanà Sadanàrbhaka Sènàmitha Dhanàdulanu, Dèvadi-Dèva Nera Nammithi-gàkanu, Nì Padàbja-Bhajanambu Marachina
9. Chakkani Mukha Kamalambunu Sadà Nà Madilò Smarana Lèkanè Durmadandha Janula Kòri Pari-thàpamulachè Dagili Nogili Durvishaya Duràsalanu Ròyalèka Sathathama Paràdhinai Chapalachitthudanaina
10. Mānavathanu Durlabha-manuchu Nenchi Paramānanda- monda-lèka; Mada Matsara Kāma Lōbha Mōhulaku Dāsudai Mōsabōthi Gāka; Modati-kulajudaguchu Bhuvini Sudrula Panulu Salpuchu Nuntini Gāka; Narādhāmulanu Rōya Rasa Vihinamayinanu Sādhimpa Thārumāru
11. Sathulaku Konnallasthikai Suthulaku Konnāllu Dhanathathulakai Thirigithinayà Thyàgarājāptha Ituvanti



Duduku...

The composer is introspective, repents about his shortcomings and appeals to Rama to be his kind savior.

“Which Lord, but you, will save a blundered soul like me?”

“I have been entrapped by evil thoughts and deeds;

I have been blind to your omnipresence;

I have, from my very early childhood, indulged in vain arguments and never enjoyed the essence of *bhajan* in your praise;

I have resorted to flattery and swindled other’s wealth;

I have wasted life seeking mundane pleasures and trivial comforts;

I knew neither *swara* nor *laya* and pretended to be your loyal devotee;

I succumbed to worldly ways and bad company, and ignored your worship.

Who, but you, will save me?”



3. Àrabhi Ràga - Àdi Thàla

Sàdhinchanè O Manasà

1. Bòdhinchina Sanmàrga-Vachanamula Bònkuchèsi Thàpattinattu
2. Samayàniki Thagu Matalàdenè
3. Dèvaki Vasudèvula Nèginchinatu
4. Rangèsudu Sadganga Janakudu Sangitha Sampradàyakudu
5. Gòpì-Manòradha Mosanga-lèkanè Gèliyu Chèsè-vàdu
6. Vanithala Sadà Sokka Jèyuchunu Mrokka Chèsè Paramàtmudadhìyu-gàka Yasòdha Thanayundanchu Mudhambunanu Muddhu-betta Navvuchundu Hari
7. Parama Bhaktha Vatsaludu Suguna Pàràvòrundu Àjanmamanghudi Kali Bādhalā Thīrchu Vādanuchunè-hrudayambujamuna Jūchuchundaga
8. Harè Ràmachandra Raghukulèsa Mrudubhàsha Sèshasayana Paranàri Sòdharà Javiràja Thuranga Ràjaràja Vinutha

Clues for crossword on page 20.
(Solution on page 23)

Across

3. ——— Tala (8 beats)
7. She wrote *Thiruppavai*.
8. Cycle of tala
9. *Nandanar Charithram* is his greatest gift to music.
10. Shyama Sastri perfected this to its present form.
11. Raga used for initial lessons in Carnatic music.
12. Creator of the musical form *Kriti*.
14. A Navagraha Kriti is in praise of this planet
20. His *Navarathna Malai* has kritis representing 9 kinds of Bhakthi.
21. She came back to life when Rama’s feet touched her.
22. Variation of a melodic line of a composition.
23. The origin of Indian music can be traced back to this.

Down

1. Music exercises based on the basic talas.
2. Sadashiva Brahmendra composed *Manasa Sancharare* in this raga.
3. Usually precedes a kriti in a concert.
4. Composer of *Krishna Nee Begane Baaro*
5. Composer/film sonwriter/actor
6. Author of *Krishnaleela Tarangini*.
13. He specialized in group kritis.
15. 17th century composer of Telugu padams.
16. Masterpiece of Jayadeva
17. An auspicious raga for mangalam.
18. The *Kriti* form was perfected by him.
19. The *Ishta Devatha* of Swathi Thirunal.
21. ——— *mata, laya pitha*



Carnatic Music Crossword

Sumanth Swaminathan

Clues on next page

[Sumanth is a High School Junior and learns
vocal and saxophone music.]

Niràmayàpaghana Sarasiruha Dhalàksha Yanuchu Vèdukonnanu
Thà Bròvakanu

9. Sri Venkatèsa Suprakàsa Sarvònnatha Sajjanamànasa Nikèthana
Kankàambaradhara Lasanmakuta Kundala Viràjitha Harè!
Yanuchu Nè Pogadagà Thyàgaràja-gèyudu Mānavèndrudaina
Rāmachandrudu
10. Samayāniki Thagu Mātalādene; Sadhbhaktula Nadatha Litlanenè
Amarikagà Nà; Pūja-konenè Alugavaddhanenè; Vimukhulathò
Jèrabòku-manenè; Vetha Galgina Thàlukommanenè;
Damasamādi Sukhadāyakudagu Sri Thyàgarājanuthudu Chentha
Rākanè



Summary

Sadhinchene...

The composer reminds himself of subtle and mysterious ways of the God and reiterates it by referring to several episodes involving Rama and Krishna.

“Sri Rama was tenacious in getting His way even if it meant breaking his own words of wisdom.”

“He spoke with tact to suit the occasion;

I am not alone in this.”

“He was mischievous to his own parents Devaki and Vasudeva;

Teased the *gopis* without satisfyng their desires;

Smiled at Yashoda mysteriously when she expressed her maternal affection;

Although He is a great savior of *bhaktas*, he never answered my prayers to free me from the misery of the world;

He appreciated my prayers and worship, but evaded me;

He asked me not to be annoyed or disappointed

He advised me not to join bad company and be persistent”



4. Varàli Ràga - Àdi Thàla

Kana Kana Ruchirà Kanakavasana Ninnu

1. Dina Dinamunu Manasuna Chanavuna Ninnu
2. Pàlugàru Mòmuna Sri Yapàra Mahima Danaru Ninnu
3. Kala Kala-manu Mukha-kala Galigina Sitha
Kulukuchu Ora-kannulachè Ninnu
4. Bàlarkàbhasu Chèla Manimaya Mâlalamkrutha Kamdhara
Sarasijàksha Varaka Pòla Suruchira Kiritadhara Sathathambu
Manasàraga
5. Sàpathnimàthayow Suruchichè-karna Sùlamaina-màta Vinula
Chuirukkana Thàlaka Sri Harini Dhyànimchi Sukhimpaga-lèda
Yatu
6. Mrugamadalaàma Subhanitala Varajatàyu Mòkshaphalada
Pavanamànasutudu Nidhu Mahima Delpa Sita Thelisi Valachi
Sokkalèdharithi Ninnu
7. Sukhàspada Vimukhambudhara Pavana Vidèhamàna
Vihàrãptha Surabhùja Mãnitha Gunàmka Chidànanda Khaga
Thuranga Dhrutaradhànga Parama Dayàkara Karunàrasa
Varunàlaya Bhayàpahàrà Sri Raghupathè
8. Kàminchi Prèmamira Karamula Nidu Pàdakamalamula
Battukonuvàdu Sàkshi Ràmanàma Rasikudu Kailàsa Sadhanudu
Sàkshi Mariyu Nàrada Paràsara Suka Saunaka Purandara Nagajà
Dharaja Mukhyulu Sàkshigàda Sundarèsa Sukha Kalàmbudhi
Vàsàsrithulakè
9. Sathathamu Prèma Pùrithudagu Thyàgaràja nuta mukhajitha
Kumudahitha Varada Ninnu



Summary

Kanakana...

A description of Sri Rama's glory, dignity and divine grace.

"Its a recurring joy to 'see' you, Sri Rama, clad in golden wraps, with gems and jewels glittering brightly around your neck.

only to understand a higher power, but also to understand a more human one. And so, whether for reaching towards heaven, or for creating unity on Earth, our fine arts such as music and dance, through their portrayal of the Hindu religion and Indian culture(s), have been and continue to be a true example of the power of the human spirit. [*Santosh is a freshman at Upenn. This essay on Music, Dance and Hindu Religion was the prize-winning entry in a competition organized by the Council of Hindu Temples of North America.*]

Match the Raga

Anjani Chitrapu

Growing up in a South Indian household in this country, we hear our parents/friends sing or play a number of Carnatic music songs. I have put together a quiz listing of some of the popular songs that I have heard. Try to match them against the correct raga. (I have looked up my dad's books to identify the ragas). Enjoy!
(Solution on page 23)

A. Songs

1. Ma mava raghu rama
2. Kala harana melara
3. Swaminatha pari palaya
4. Entha nerchina
5. Kamakshi
6. Nannu kanna talli
7. Shakti saahitha Ganapathim
8. Endro mahanu bhavala
9. Paramathmudu
10. Pranamamyaham
11. Marugelara
12. Samaja vara gamana
13. Kshira saagara
14. Manasa yetu lo
15. Vedalenu ko dandapani
16. Vatapi Ganapathim
17. Bhagyada Lakshmi
18. Mokshmamulu galada
19. Shobillu
20. Rama ninnu nammina

B. Raga

- a. Kesari
- b. Hindolam
- c. Jayantasri
- d. Saranga
- e. Nattai
- f. Vagadeeshwari
- g. Suddha Saveri
- h. Jagan Mohini
- i. Shuddha Dhanyasi
- j. DevaGandhari
- k. Madhyamavati
- l. Saramati
- m. Bhairavi
- n. Mohana
- o. Sri
- p. Malayamarutham
- q. Todi
- r. Gowla
- s. Shankarabharanam
- t. Hamsadhvani

[*Anjani is a fifth grader at the BlueBell Elementary School.*]

general and Hindus in particular? Well, if so, then our music and dance provide the unique bridge that connects our religion with our culture or perhaps more aptly our cultures. For, India represents not one but a rich blend of varied cultures, some linguistic, some geographic, but all with the underlying common set of values that are an integral part of our religion. Our music and dance exemplify the culture of the time and place of their origin; the *Kuchipudi* dance style is an example of the culture in the Krishnadevaraya dynasty; *Bharathanatyam* portrays the culture in the Chola dynasty and *Mohiniyattam* is a unique example of the Kerala culture. Religion is the common thread that runs through all of them, be it the splendour of “Srinivasa Kalyanam”, the triumph of love and devotion over wealth in “Sri Krishna thulabhaaram” or the extinction of evil in “Narakaasura Samhaaram”.

Indian music and dance are unique in allowing the artists the freedom to interpret and project their values. Take music, for example. Almost all other forms of music use harmony as their platform. However, in Indian music harmony takes a back seat; melody completely dominates. Additionally, whereas most European and Western music is based on an extremely rigid platform, Indian music gives the performer the ability to interject his/her own style and his/her own interpretation of the song/composition by using variations of the notes. These are known as "sangatis". Indian dance contains a similar potential for individuality. One of the fundamental concepts of both Indian religion and culture is the concept of "*manodharma*", which states that each person has the unique ability to interpret religion and culture as he/she sees fit. This concept is extremely strong in both Indian music and dance – that’s why the *kriti*, “Upacharamu” composed by Thyagaraja in raga Bhairavi sung by M.S. Subbulakshmi sounds different but equally enjoyable when compared to a rendering of the same piece by the late Maharajapuram Santhanam; or the Bhajan *Isathana dhan ke* by Kabir Das when presented by different singers; so is a portrayal of “Ardhanaareeswaram” or “Sri Krishna thulaabhaaram” or “Srinivasa Kalyanam” by different dancers – each artist’s presentation with a unique personal stamp and style. The central theme of our religion – that all religious practices are but different pathways leading to the final goal of *Moksha* or Salvation – finds expression in this freedom that our artists enjoy and respect. Unity amidst diversity and freedom to explore and experiment are practices and not just slogans in our culture and religion and our fine arts uniquely illustrate this commitment.

From selfless worship to dancing deities, from raga to manodharma, music and dance have been the tools for society not

Didn’t Dhruva find solace in your *dhyana* when Surichi, his step-mother, tortured him with harsh words?
 Didn’t Jatayu attain *moksha* by your presence alone?
 Wasn’t Sita ecstatic when Hanuman narrated your glory?
 Anjaneya, Lord Shiva, Indra, sage Narada and others attest to your charm and magnificent beauty.



5. Sri Ràga - Àdi Thàla

Endarò Mahànubhàvulu+Andariki Vandanamul+endarò

1. Chanduru Varnuni Anda-chandamunu Hrudaya+ aravindamunu Jùchi Brahma+ananda+manubhavinchu Vâr+endarò
2. Sàma-gàna-lòla Manasija-làvanya Dhanya-mùrdhanyul+ endarò
3. Månasa Vana-chara Vara Sanchàramu Nilipi Mùrthi Båguga Podaganè Vâr+endarò
4. Saraguna Pàdamulaku Svàntamanu Saròjamunu Samarpanamu Sèyuvâr+endarò
5. Pathitha Pàvanudanè Paràthparuni Gurinchi Paramàrdhamagu Nija-màrgamuthonu Pàdunchunu Sallàpamuthò Swara-laya+adi Ràgamula Teliyu Vâr+endarò
6. Hari-guna Manulagu Saramulu Galamuna Sòbhillu Bhakthakotul+ilalò Thelivito Chelimitò Karuna+kalgi Jagamellanu Sudhà-drushtichè Bròchu Vâr+endarò
7. Hoyalu-mìra Nadalu+kalgu Sarasuni Sadà Kanula Jùchuchunu Pulaka-sarirulai Ananda Payòdhi Nimagnulai Mudambunanu Yasamu Gala Vâr+endarò
8. Parama Bhàgavatha Mauni-vara Sasivibhakara Sanakasandana Digisa Sura Kimpurusha Kanakasipu-suta Nàrada Thumburu Pavana-sùnu Bàlachandra-dhara Suka-saròja-bhava Bhù-sura-varulu Parama-pàvanulu Ghanulu Sàsavathulu Kamalabhava-sukhamu Sada+anubhavulu Gàka Endarò
9. Nì Mènu Nàma Vaibhavammulanu Nì Paràkrama Dhairyamula Sànthà Månasamu Nìvulanu Vachana Satyamunu Raghuvàra! Nì

Yeda Sadbhakthiyu Janinchakanu Durmathamulanu Kalla
Chèsinatti Nì Madi Neringi Samthathambunanu Guna-
bhajana+ananda Kìrtanamu Sèyu Vâr+endarò

10. Bhàgavatha Ràmàyana Gìta+adi Sruthi Sàsthra Purànapu
Marmamulan Siva+adi Shan-mathamula Gùdhamula Muppadi
Mukkòti Sura+antharangamula Bhàvamula Neringi Bhàva-ràga
Laya+adi Saukhyamulache Chira+ayuvul+kaligi Nirapadhi
Sukha+atmulai Thyàgaràja+aptulaina Vâr+endarò
11. Prema Muppiri-gonu-vèla Nàmamunu Dalachè-vàru Ràma-
bhakthudaina Thyàgaràja-nuthuniki Nija-dàsul+endarò



Summary

Endaro...

An appreciation of great human beings and their virtues.

“Many are the enlightened minds and I salute them all”

“Many are those who realize God in their hearts and experience the ultimate joy;

Many are those who delight themselves in the chants of sama veda and ‘see’ the Lord’s glory;

Many are those who offer themselves as flowers to the Lord;

Many enlightened are those who pursue the truth, know *swara*, *laya* and *raga*, and praise the Lord;

Many are the *bhaktas* who enrich the world with their wisdom, love and compassion;

Many are those who are enthralled by your majesty;

Many are the great sages and ardent devotees who ‘experience’ the God;

Many are those dear to Thyagaraja who understand the scriptures, religion and rejoice *bhava*, *raga*, *laya* and other elements of music;

Many ardent devotees of Sri Rama, I salute them all.”

[The summaries were compiled by Drs. Vasant Kumar and Uma Prabhakar, using the following sources: 'Spiritual Heritage Of Tyagaraja' by V. Raghavan and C. Ramanujachari., 'Tyagaraja Keertanaalu' by V. Veerabhadra Sastry and 'Tyagaraja-Life and Lyrics' by W.J. Jackson.]



as devotional as the hymns we hear in a local temple. If we listen to the lyrics of the very popular *Nannu Vidachi* (Raga Reethi Gowla):

Baaguga Nannelu Kovara?

Thyagaraja Nutha Eethanuvu Needera

Nannu Vidachi Kadalakuraa

And we hear Thyagaraja mourning, "I cannot bear being out of your presence even for a moment, Lord, adored by Thyagaraja. Dear Rama, do not leave me, do not go, I am all yours", how can we really separate music from religion? Or the message conveyed through the *abhinayam* of Dasaavatara or Daksha Yagna? Or the outpouring of devotion and love for Krishna in Meera Bhajans, as in *Hari... thum haro?* Truly music and dance display the most basic form of expressing one's religion: through worship.

Another expression of this close knit integration between music and dance on one hand and Hinduism on the other can be found in the themes and stories depicted by some of the best known dance presentations. The stories of angels, demons, and gods that we read of in scriptures are but the means by which to understand the moral and spiritual values of our religion. However, oftentimes the religious anecdotes that we read in the Vedas or other religious scriptures seem abstract and unreal without a visual frame of reference. Dance, particularly, gives us that visual image, helps us make the connection, and understand the meaning and message behind the actions portrayed. And with understanding comes appreciation of the values exemplified by the artist's presentation. If we look, for example, at the dance performance *Jaya Jaya Devi*, composed by the very famous Lalgudi Jayaraman, we learn the story of the different moods and physical manifestations of Goddess Parvati. More importantly, however, by watching this performance, we learn of the ongoing struggle between good and evil as well as the values that characterize both good and evil. And this value system we learn is fundamental to our understanding of Hinduism, which teaches us to emulate many of the character traits shown by Parvati: of strength, compassion, and goodwill. Dance, thus adds the visual dimension to enhance our understanding of our religion and culture. So by allowing us to visualize various aspects of our religion, music and dance enhance our understanding of the moral, ethical, social and spiritual values that Hinduism is imbued with.

Both Indian music and dance are then pathways to a better understanding of our religion. But what about ourselves? Our culture? Isn't culture a measure of everything that unifies us as Indians in

The podium and the pandal built for the Aradhana were sights by themselves. With the thousands of people gathered together to pay respects and homage to the great saint & composer and one of the Trimurthys of Carnatic music, there was a sense of reverence and humility in the air. The famous and well-known artists and even some of the unapproachable ones were present

[*Hema Ramamurthy is a life member of Sruti and a member of the Library Committee.*]



Fine Arts ~ Music & Dance

Santosh Adipudi Vardhana

What do we have within us that is good enough to give to the gods? Or to each other, for that matter? Born mortal and doomed to an inescapable lifetime of fallibility, the men and women of society decided to give those higher controlling powers, the gods, the greatest gift they could ever give, the manifestation of the human spirit. Today we call it art. In some countries this means poetry; in others, something else. But for us Indians, art brings to mind two things: music and dance. But this Indian art is not merely a manifestation of human spirit; it is a manifestation of the uniquely Indian spirit. And so the vehicles by which we become closer to God become the vehicles by which we become closer to one another as well. And those vehicles are Indian music and dance and they are part and parcel of our Hindu Religion and Culture. As is the case in several Eastern cultures, the classical side of our music and dance have religion and worship as their primary themes while culture finds an expression in the popular or *folk* music and dance art forms.

Perhaps the most apparent evidence of this strong relationship (between our music and dance and our Hindu religion) is the very message that these art forms convey. Many forms of classical music, for example, are direct forms of worship. Many of the greatest devotees in India's history are composers whose compositions are a result of their utter devotion to God. Who better to use as an example than the great Thyagaraja? Thyagaraja is regarded by many as perhaps the greatest confluence of music and devotion or *Bhakti* - a man who recited Lord Rama's name 960 million times in order to become one with God. Many of Thyagaraja's compositions that we sing today are

Thyagaraja Aradhana at Thiruvaiyaru

M.M. Subramaniam

Thiruvaiyaru. A small town in idyllic Tanjavur district, Tamil Nadu, India. A place where a few hundred years ago, a man walked on its streets, "*begging*" for his daily food and in doing so attracted a large following. A man who revolutionized South Indian classical music structure as no one else before him or after. One of the greatest composers of classical music in any genre, he lived a long life, composing and passing on his marvelous outpourings to a legion of disciples who spread it all over South India.

His name was Thyagaraja, named after the presiding deity of Thiruvavur temple where he was born. A name revered wherever Carnatic music is performed.

A few years after his death in 1847, a group of his disciples gathered, annually on his death anniversary, at the place of his samadhi on the banks of river Kaveri to perform an aradhana. This tradition has become **THE ARADHANA** that many Carnatic music lovers wish to attend at least once in their lifetime.

I was able to fulfill this year my long held wish to attend the aradhana. It took place this year on 25 January. The village where Thyagaraja grew up has grown to be a small overcrowded town. On the aradhana day, one could see many musicians walking, some of them bare feet, from Thirumanjanam Street, where the composer lived and the samadhi on the banks of Kaveri.

The aradhana was conducted in a large pandal, which could have accommodated about 1500 persons. Every one, rich or poor, VIP or commoner, famous or not had to sit on the sands of the riverbed. Many of the devotees had arrived the previous night itself, slept in the pandal and after an early bath in the river, took vantage positions in the front. The aradhana was scheduled at 10:15 a.m. I arrived with my brother-in-law and his wife at about 7:30 and could only get seats about 15th row from the place where the main musicians sat. And we had VIP tickets!

The aradhana was organized with meticulous care. The fact that it was televised live nationally may have had a bearing on the punctuality.

On the morning of the aradhana, some of the musicians donned period clothes and simulating the *uncha virutti* tradition that Thyagaraja used, walked from Thirumanjanam Street to the samadhi. All the

while nadaswaram music was played by leading nadaswara vidwans in the pandal. After the uncha virutti musicians arrived in the pandal and sat down and before the singing of the Pancharatna kritis, flutists led by veteran N. Ramani played the Bhairavi kriti “Chetulara”.

The rendering of the Pancharatna kritis was, of course, the high point of the Aradhana. There certainly was an aura of spirituality as the musicians performed facing the statue of the composer at the samadhi. Some of the leading daily papers had included the complete pancharatna kritis with swarams and sahityams. They were distributed free to the audience to help them follow the main musicians.

It was quite a thrilling experience, accentuated by the fact that many in the audience also participated. Almost right next to me an amateur mridanga vidwan was accompanying the music. And a few rows to the front a couple of kanjira players were doing the same. Many others were singing along the kritis with varying degrees of intensity.

The aradhana celebrations in Thiruvaiyaru were conducted this year over a week. I understood that almost any musician who wanted to sing or play an instrument was allowed a chance. Each day’s program started at 10 a.m. and went on till almost midnight. Most senior musicians usually performed during the evenings or nights. The junior and other not well known musicians were given 10 minutes each to perform while the better known and senior musicians were given slots of 20 minutes.

The musicians performed on one of two raised daises almost next to each other. Even as one musician was about to finish, the musician slated to perform next came on the other dais. The list containing which musician would perform on what day and when was printed and distributed. The whole arrangement seemed to go with clockwork like precision.

There was lot of activities going on outside the pandal also. Many vendors, especially of cassettes/CDs and music books plied their trade. There were food stalls, concession stands, etc. (The organizers had arranged for free lunch and dinner for every one attending the aradhana. This took place both at the aradhana site as well as at Thirumanjanam Street house.) People gathered around trees and wherever some shade could be found to exchange information, maybe renew old friendships ... I chanced to meet a couple of friends from New Jersey!

[Dr. M.M. Subramaniam is a founder member of SRUTI and a past president]

Though chairs were available, most people preferred to make themselves comfortable-sitting on the floor, and bringing blankets to ward off the cold. There were a few snack bars outside that people frequented to during the course of the night. There were also many vendors selling music tapes, CDs, and books.

The stage was very well decorated, with a nice backdrop made up of fresh flowers. It was very artistically done each day. On either side of the stage there were two huge TV screens on which the program was projected allowing a clear view of the performers to the audience. There were also TV cameras and major audio companies busy with recordings.

Getting to the Nehru stadium posed no problems. The auto-rickshaw and taxi drivers were familiar with the festival and even engaged in conversation about the artists who were going to be performing that evening. However, Pune, being a large town with a diverse population, had quite a few people who were not involved or even interested in music. I felt they lived a life quite untouched by the magnanimity of the event that was taking place in their own hometown.

This was in striking contrast to what I saw in the small village of Thiruvaiyaru, on the banks of the river Kaveri, in the Tanjore District. A quaint village, a village that could easily be overlooked at other times, comes under limelight during the Thyagaraja Aradhana festival. It is a tradition that has continued ever since it was started by some of Thyagaraja’s disciples in 1847 to pay respects to him. We could see the involvement of everyone in the community as soon as we entered the village. With banners flying, houses decorated with fresh flowers, elaborate *rangolis* in the front yard, it felt like the whole village was getting ready for a festival. In front of some thatched huts, we saw some spectacular *rangolis*, with different poses of Thyagaraja. We felt compelled to take photographs of some of them (with the owners’ permission of course). The Panchanadeshwara temple stands as an example of the huge temples of south India, with its enormous *avarnams*. The size of the temple stands out in my memory. For a village as small as Thiruvaiyaru, the enormous temple stood as a focal point, reflecting the important role the temple played in people’s lives. The Panchanadeshwara temple, I heard, gets its name from the fact that the five rivers (the Kaveri and its tributaries) flow apart from each other in the short distance between Tanjore and Thiruvaiyaru.

An Unforgettable Experience...

Hema Ramamurthy

Last year, I had the opportunity to attend two well-known music events in India. They were the Sawai Gandharva Festival in Pune and the Thyagaraja Aradhana at Thiruvaiyaru. I had heard of these events ever since my childhood and hoped to attend them someday. I am glad I got a chance to take these trips.

With the video tapings of these programs and the present day mass communication in place people get to view these programs in the comfort of their living rooms. But I wanted to see and experience something more: the experience of being there in person, feel the music in the air, and be with thousands of people who gather from near and far away places just for the love of music. I think one has to be in these places to feel the energy and spirit floating in the atmosphere.

The Sawai Gandharva festival I attended was conducted on Dec 9th, 10th, and 11th, of '98. As is the custom, the programs were conducted during the night. It's an all night program, starting at 8:00pm and lasting until 6:00am the next day. Each artist was given a time slot of 1½ to 2 hours. The program included Shenai, Sitar, and vocal performances by some very well-known and some not-so-well-known artists. The program concluded with the vocal performance by the famous artist, Feroz Dastur of Kirana Gharana, which topped the festival and brought it to a grand finale. (Pt. Bhimsen Joshi traditionally did the honor, but because of his illness, he was unable to participate.) Ganapathi Bhatt from Karnataka captured the hearts of the audience with his music and was among those who made it worthwhile to be awake in the wee hours of the morning. The program ended on the morning of Dec 11th, with a playing of a recording of Sawai Gandharva, and everyone remembering and paying homage to this great giant in the music field.

The venue for the Sawai Gandharva festival had changed. For years, the festival was held outdoors. The previous year the festival had to be postponed due to severe rain. The festival in '98 was held indoors in the Nehru stadium, the capacity of which I think was about 3000. (I'm not sure about the exact number) This, I heard, is a very small number compared to the 10000-15000 people that used to gather for the previous festivals that took place outdoors. There were people of all ages: young college students, older people and many young couples (some with small children falling asleep on their laps).

Two Paintings by Thyagaraja

Prabhakar Chitrapu

Thyagaraja was also a painter. A painter of portraits, for example, like Rembrandt van Rijn. A painter of abstract ideas, for example, like Salvador Dali. Thyagaraja's medium of painting was made up of Words and Music and his driving forces were Rama Bhakti and Musical Creativity.

The kriti, *Nanu Palimpa*, is an example of a portrait painting, in which Thyagaraja depicts the colors and hues of Sri Rama: glowing blue of the body, shining white of the pearl necklace, and golden light of the bow.

There are two other kritis, which are more like paintings of abstract concepts. One is (*Pranava*)-*Nada-sudha-rasambu-ilanu-nara-akriti-aye*, in which Thyagaraja describes his concept of how the primordial sound, *Pranava Nada*, takes the concrete shape of Carnatic Music, by drawing an analogy to how the Universal God took the specific human form in Rama. The other is *Bantu-rithi-koluvu-iyavayya*, in which Thyagaraja draws an analogy between the way in which a Rama-bhakta is protected by Rama-bhakti and the way in which a soldier is protected by his armor, shield and sword. I will expand on these two kritis below.

Pallavi:

Nada-sudha-rasamibu+ilanu-nara+akriti-aye

Pranava-Nada-sudha-rasamibu+ilanu-nara+akriti-aye

Anupallavi:

Veda+agama-sastra-purana+adulaku+aadharamaina

Nada-sudha-rasamibu+ilanu-nara+akriti-aye

Pranava Nada-sudha-rasamibu+ilanu-nara+akriti-aye

Charanam:

Swaramulu-aaru+oka-Gantalu,

Vara-raagamu-Kodandamu,

Dura-naya-desyamu Tri-gunamu,

Niratha-gathi-Saramu-raa!

Sarasa-sangathulu sandarbhamu-gala giramulu-raa!

Dhara-bhajana-bhaagyamu-raa!

Thyagaraju-sevinchu-

Nada-sudha-rasamibu+ilanu-nara+akriti-aye

Pranava Nada-sudha-rasamibu+ilanu-nara+akriti-aye

In the Pallavi, Thyagaraja says the *Nada-sudha-rasamu* (the sweet juice of Nadam) took the form of human (*nara+akriti-aaye*) on earth (*ilanu*). In fact, it is the *Pranava-Nadam*, the primordial sound Om, which took the human shape. Although Thyagaraja says ‘human’ form in general here, he is referring to Rama’s human-form, as it will be clear in the charanam.

In the Anupallavi, Thyagaraja goes on to claim that it is verily that Nadam and Pranava Nadam, which is the source and support (*aadharamaina*) of Vedas, Aagamas, Sastras, Puranas and all the rest (*veda-aagama-sastra-purana-aadulaku*) !

In the final part of the kriti, Thyagaraja lets his imagination free and paints a beautiful picture of the Rama’s human-form that the Pranava-Nadam has taken. The analogy is between the Rama and the (Carnatic) Music, and Rama’s ornamentations and various aspects of (Carnatic) Music.

Firstly, the seven (*aaru+oka=6+1*) notes (*swaramulu*) of (Carnatic) Music have become the tinkling little bells (*gantalu*) of (presumably) Rama’s crown. The beautiful (*vara*) raagam has become Rama’s bow, the *Kodandam*. The three aspects of rendering (Carnatic) Music, Dura (speed)-Naya (grace & beauty)-Desyam (colloquialism), are the three human Gunas (Satva, Rajas, Tamo). The progressive tempo (*niratha-gati*) has become the arrow (*saramu*). The lilting *sangathis* are indeed the appropriately-spoken speech (*sandarbhamu-gala giramulu*).

I find these comparisons fascinating: for example, the seven notes, as in kalpita swaras at the end of a kriti, produce sounds as short and varied as the sounds of small tinkling bells. Similarly, exposition of a Raga is extensive and long, so that the comparison to a long bow seems fitting. The comparison between quick and directed progression of a kriti and an arrow is fitting as is the comparison between sangathis and well spoken words!

Now Thyagaraja wraps up the charanam, by saying that in this world (*dhara*), being able to perform Rama Bhajana is a good fortune (*bhagyam*). The Nada-sudha-rasam, worshipped by (*sevinchu*) Thyagaraja, has indeed taken human form.

Pallavi:
Bantu-rithi koluvu+iyavayya Rama !

Anupallavi:
Thunta-vinti-vaani modalaina mada+aadula nela-kuula-jeyu
Nija-bantu-rithi koluvu+iyavayya Rama !

Charanam:
Roma+aanchamane ghana-kanchukamu
Rama-bhakthudane mudra-billayu
Rama-namamane vara-khadgamu+idi
Raajillunayya
Thyagarajuniki Bantu-rithi koluvu+iyavayya Rama !

Thyagaraja starts the kriti by asking Rama to keep him near (*koluvu+iyavayya*), as He would a soldier/servant (*bantu*).

Keep me, says Thyagaraja, as you would a true servant (*nija-bantu-rithi*), who would bring down (*nela-kula-cheyu*) arrogant (*mada*) ones, such as Manmatha, who carries a flower bow (*thunta-vinti-vaani* = Manmatha) etc (*aadula*).

Once again, here in the charanam, Thyagaraja produces the most beautiful (hyperbole!) analogy between the soldier’s attributes and those of a Rama-bhakta. *Roma-aanchanam* is the raising of body hair, which can happen during spells of devotional rapture. This very personal experience of Thyagaraja is compared to the majestic armor (*ghana kanchukamu*) of a soldier ! The idea is that the risen-hair covers the bhakta’s body and protects him as the armor covers a soldier’s chest and protects him ! I find this comparison really fascinating.

Thyagaraja goes on to complete the analogy, by saying that the designation as a *Rama-bhaktha* is like an in-signia-bearing shield (*mudra-billa*) of a soldier. And, *Rama nama* shines (*raajillunu*) as the great sword (*vara khadgamu*) of the soldier. Please keep this Thyagaraja near you as you would a trusted servant.

Note: Translation of several words, such as Dura, Naya, Desyam, Nirathagati, Giramu, posed a challenge for me. I am not sure that I translated them accurately. I would appreciate very much if you could share your thoughts/corrections.

[Dr. Prabhakar Chitrapu, a life member of Sruti, has served on Sruti’s board as a vice-president and is a frequent contributor to Sruti’s publications.]