

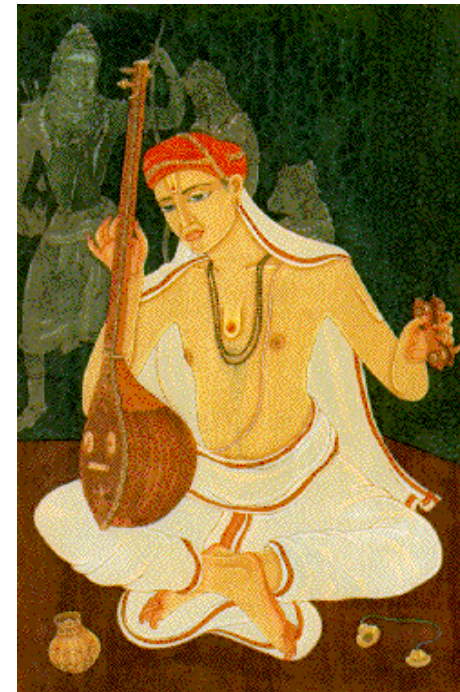
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Tyagaraja Aradhana

2008



S R U T I
The India Music & Dance Society
 Philadelphia, PA

Editor's Note

Welcome to Sruti's 2008 Tyagaraja Aradhana festival. It is a wonderful time to remember this great saint who has touched so many people through his music, his bhakti, and through the story of his life.

Sruti has an exciting day planned for you to remember Tyagaraja on this special day with offerings of Tyagaraja Kritis by the community and a concert in the evening. This issue of Sruti Ranjani carries articles by children, and adults and includes crosswords and brain teasers for your enjoyment. Again, many thanks to all for taking the time to write for this issue.

We would also like to take this opportunity to request articles and reviews from you for upcoming issues of Sruti Notes and Sruti Ranjani.

Thanks,

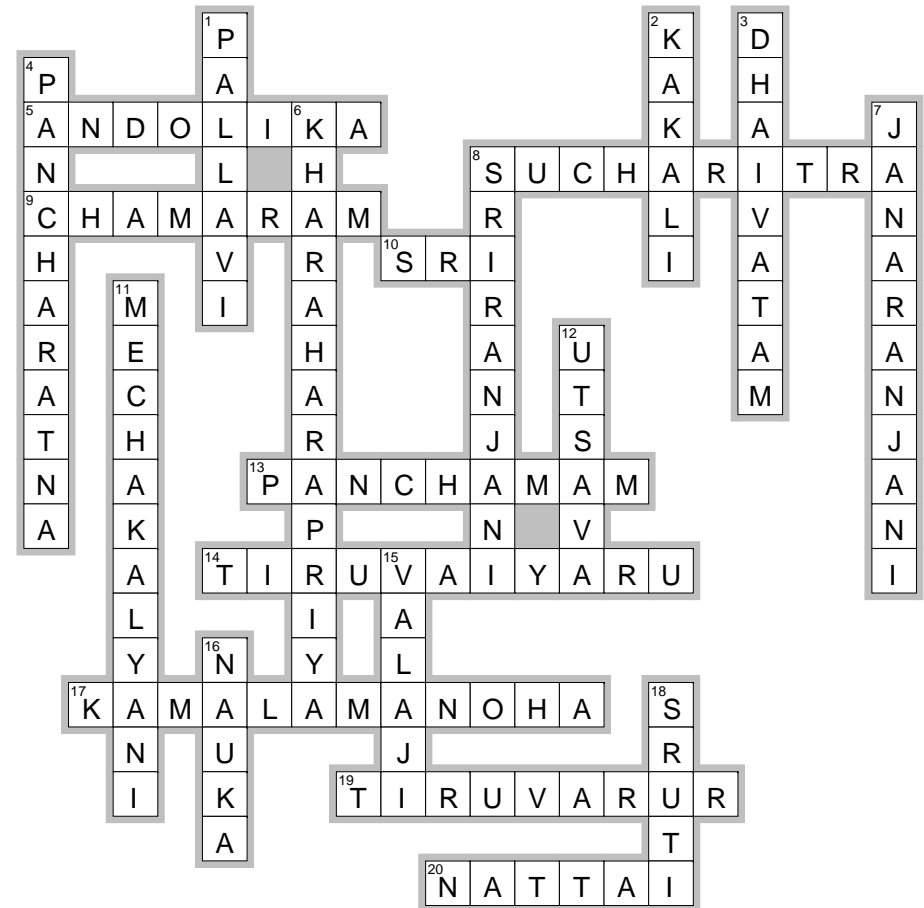
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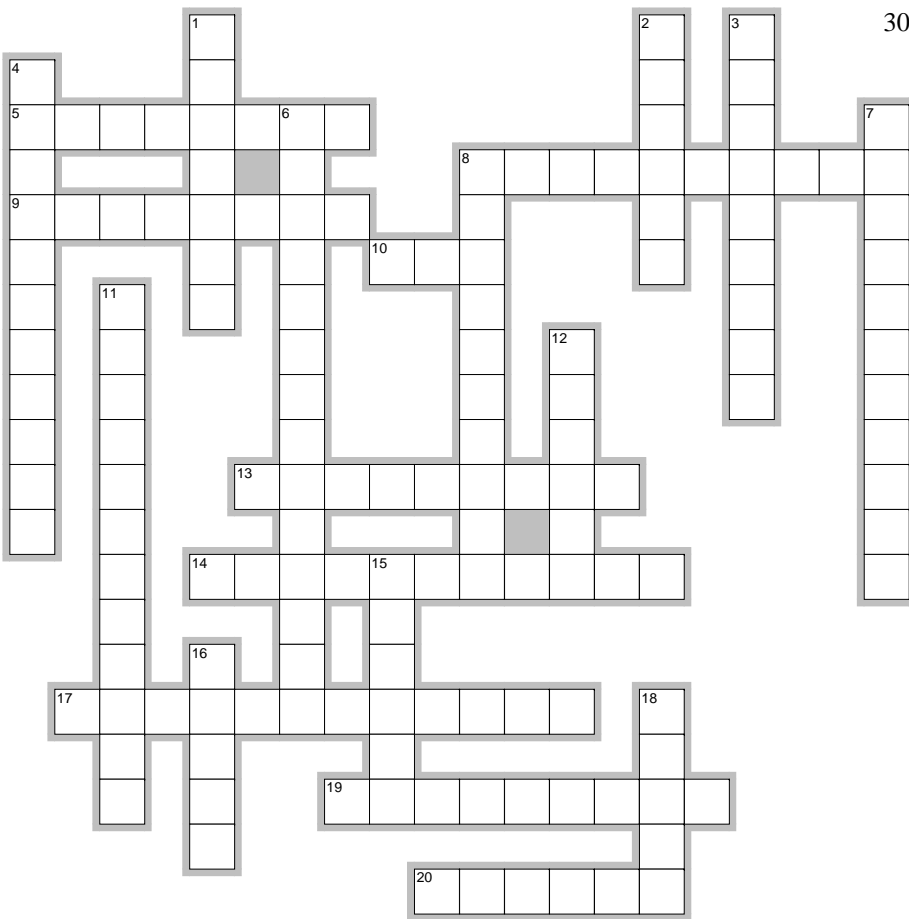
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Solution to Crossword



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Across

By Dinakar Subramanian

5. RAGAM FOR RAGA SUDHARASA
8. MELAKARTA 67
9. DIKSHITAR'S SHANMUKHAPRIYA
10. ENDARO MAHANUBHAVULU
13. THIS NOTE HAS NO PRATI OR SHUDDHA VARIATIONS IN A SAMPURNA AAROHANAM
14. THE MAIN THYAGARAJA ARADHANA CELEBRATED HERE
17. KAMALAMANOHARI MINUS RI (tricky one)
19. THE TRINITY WAS BORN HERE
20. JAGADANANDA KARAKA IS IN THIS RAGAM

Down

1. RAGAM, THANAM AND ?
2. TYPE OF NISHADAM
3. THYAGARAJA DOES NOT USE THIS IN 'ENDARO ...'
4. 5 GEMS OF THYAGARAJA
6. ABHOGI + PANCHAMAM + KAISHIKI NISHADAM
7. RAGAM OF PAHIMAM SRI RAJA RAJESWARI
8. ABHOGI PLUS KAISHIKI NISHADAM
11. MELAKARTHA 65
12. SAMPRADAYA KRITIS
15. MALAYAMARUTHAM MINUS RISHABHAM
16. CHARITRAM
18. THE INDIA MUSIC AND DANCE SOCIETY

PROGRAM

- 08:00 AM Puja
- 08:15 AM Utsava Kriti rendition by group
- 09:00 AM Pancharatna Kriti rendition by group
- 10:30 AM Individual Singing
- 05:00 PM Concert of the day
Vocal Concert by **Abhishek Raghuram and Party**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

1. The Delaware Temple, for providing the venue for the Aradhana, P Sarma and Bal Reddy of the Delaware temple board for their help with logistics.
2. Sri K.S. Narayana Bhattar, for priestly services during morning Puja.
3. Members of the Utsava Sampradaya Kriti group, Members of the Pancharatnam Kriti group, Srivalli Pillutla for organizing the bulk of the Pancharatnam rehearsal sessions, the children in the group for their dedication and effort.
4. The individual participants — Our thanks for signing up in large numbers and making this day a success.
5. The artistes of the evening concert — Abhishek Raghuram and Party.
6. Smt. Deepa Viswanathan, for painting the oil on canvas portrait of Tyagaraja and donating it to Sruti.
7. Smt. Sharmila Rao, for assisting with the stage decorations.

ABOUT THE ARTISTES OF THE EVENING

Abhishek Raghuram is the grandson of Padmashri Palghat Raghu. Before taking up vocal music, Abhishek had his initial training in mridangam from his grandfather. Abhishek has been undergoing training in vocal music under Shri P.S. Narayanaswamy since 1994. He is also a proficient kanjira artiste. He has accompanied various artistes and has played with mridangam maestros Palghat Raghu, Dr.T.K.Murthy, and Umayalpuram Sivaraman. He has won several prizes in competitions conducted by the Music Academy, Narada Gana Sabha, Mylapore Fine Arts, Thyaga Brahma Gana Sabha etc. At the age of 7, Raghuram was awarded the gold medal for mridangam in the 'Mazhalai Medhai Contest'. He also won the first prize in the pallavi singing competition organized by S.Balachander Trust – Madras in the year 1996.

Mysore V. Srikanth is a senior disciple of Vidwan Sri H.K. Narasimha Murthy of Mysore. He started learning the violin at a very young age and has undergone rigorous training for more than eighteen years. Srikanth has been giving performances from the age of 15. He has gained rich experience by accompanying top artists like R. K. Srikanth, Dr. M. Balamurali Krishna, T. N. Seshagopalan and others. Srikanth, a graded artist of AIR & Doordarshan, performs regularly for All India Radio, Doordarshan, and other T.V Channels. He has been conferred with the title 'Kala Praveena' in Feb 2002 at Bangalore. In 2004, he was honored with the prestigious award for talented young musicians - 'Ananya Yuva Puraskara' by the organization 'Ananya' of Bangalore.

B. Ganapathy Raman began his training in mridangam under "Laya Vadhya Kovida" Kumbakonam Sri. Rajappa Iyer, and continued his tutelage under Srirangarajapuram Sri Jayaraman, Nagai Sri Soundarajan and later on came under the tutelage of Srimushnam Sri. Raja Rao. He has won many awards including the "Yuva Kala Bharathi" Award from Bharat Kalachar, "Nadha Oli" Title from Raga Sudha Sabha, Best Mridangam Artist Award from Sabhas like Music Academy (1999, Indian Fine Arts(1998), Sri Krishna Gana Sabha (1982). He has accompanied various stalwarts including Dr. M. Balamuralikrishna, Lalgudi Sri G. Jayaraman, Sri. D.K. Jayaraman, Palaghat Sri K.V. Narayanaswamy, Sri. T.K. Govinda Rao, and Sri. T.V. Sankara Narayanan, to name a few.

Match the Gatis (Gaits)

By: Karthik Pillutla

1. Ta ka Ta ki ta	A. Chatushra
2. Ta ki ta	B. Tishra
3. Ta ka ta ki ta ta ka dhi mi	C. Mishra
4. Ta ka dhi mi	D. Khanda
5. Ta ki ta ta ka dhi mi	E. Sankeerna

A(4)	B(2)	C(5)	D(1)	E(3)
Answer Key: Match the Ragas				
A(5)	B(9)	C(12)	D(4)	E(10)
G(11)	H(1)	I(5)	J(8)	K(6)
				L(7)
				F(2)

Divine Composition by Swami Tyagaraja

By Arvind Kumar, 15, student of Smt. Kalyani Ramani NJ

Match the Ragas

By: Karthik Pillutla

A. Abhogi	1.	SR ₂ G ₃ PD ₃ S SD ₂ PG ₃ R ₂ S
B. Anandabhiravi	2.	SR ₂ G ₃ M ₂ PD ₂ N ₃ S SN ₃ D ₂ PM ₂ G ₃ R ₂ S
C. Arabhi	3.	SR ₃ G ₃ M ₁ PD ₃ N ₃ S SN ₃ PM ₁ R ₃ S
D. Bilahari	4.	SR ₂ G ₃ PD ₂ S SN ₃ D ₂ PM ₁ G ₃ R ₂ S
E. Gowla	5.	SR ₂ G ₂ M ₁ D ₂ S SD ₂ M ₁ G ₂ R ₂ S
F. Kalyani	6.	SR ₁ M ₁ PD ₁ S SN ₃ D ₁ PM ₁ G ₃ R ₁ S
G. Khamas	7.	SR ₂ M ₁ PN ₂ S SN ₂ PD ₂ N ₂ PM ₁ R ₂ G ₂ R ₂ S
H. Mohana	8.	SR ₂ G ₃ M ₁ PD ₂ N ₃ S SN ₃ D ₂ PM ₁ G ₃ R ₂ S
I. Nattai	9.	SG ₂ R ₂ G ₂ M ₁ PD ₂ PS SN ₃ D ₂ PM ₁ G ₂ R ₂ S
J. Sankarabharanam	10.	SR ₁ M ₁ PN ₃ S SN ₃ PM ₁ R ₁ G ₃ M ₁ R ₁ S
K. Saveri	11.	SM ₁ G ₃ M ₁ PD ₂ N ₂ S SN ₂ D ₂ PM ₁ G ₃ R ₂ S
L. Shree	12.	SR ₂ M ₁ PD ₂ S SN ₃ D ₂ PM ₁ G ₃ R ₂ S

Solution on next page

Tyagaraja's infinite compositions have been a communication between the Lord and his devotee. In his songs, Tyagaraja would adore Rama, share his personal hardships, and even complain or criticize Rama, in a playful way. The composition, "Rama Nannu Brovara" best describes the close relation between Tyagaraja and Rama. Tyagaraja endeavors to grab the attention of the Lord, and secure his love for Him. This is similar to a child persuading his parents for a desirable item. In this case, Tyagaraja is invoking the protection of Rama, and tries to persuade Him by adoring His authority and magnificence.

"Rama nannu brovara vemako lokabhi
Cimalo brahmalo shiva keshavadulalo prema mlra melugu cunde birudu vahincina sita
Meppulakai kannatavu-nappu badaga virravigi tappu panulu leka unde tyagaraja vinuta sita"

Tyagaraja converses with Rama :

"O lord Rama, protector of the world! Won't you come and protect me? You are regarded as the whole Cosmos, ranging from a tiny ant to the trinity: Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. You are the charmer of mankind who awes and attracts all.

O lord Rama, protector of the world! Won't you come and protect me? Have I ever desired wealth- from a mere quarter to conducting a lethargic, material life, filled with conceit and overindulgence? Have I ever been arrogant, committed sins, or had been involved in corrupted practices O Rama- worshipped by this Tyagaraja?

O lord Rama, protector of the world! Won't you come and protect me?" Inevitably, the line "Cimalo brahmalo shiva keshavadulalo" appeals to me the most. One can easily visualize the Lord's radiance of divine love enveloping and protecting His humble devotee who kneels besides Him praying for protection. Tyagaraja metaphorically compares Rama existence ranging from a petite ant to the ultimate Trinity: Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. Thus, Tyagaraja exhibit's the infinite glory, stating that there is not a place where Rama does not exist.

Just by hearing and interpreting the meaning of this divine script, one can feel the immense love flowing between Tyagaraja and Rama. Tyagaraja bribes Rama, praising His omnipresence, omnipotence, and omniscience. The Saint pleads to the Lord that although he, Tyagaraja is free from sins, ego and desire for wealth, Rama does not come forward to protect him. What wrong has he done to displease Rama, he asks in anguish. By seeing both the Sage's musical genius, and devotion, it is possible to see how Tyagaraja melts the Lord's heart drawing His attention. Ten days before Tyagaraja died, Rama gave him a vision, as if he was in Lanka, ready to fight Ravana. In this revelation, Rama told Tyagaraja that he will merge with Him, ultimately attaining

Moksham. Tyagaraja composed a song of this vision. One day before his death, Tyagaraja took sanyasa and detached himself from the world. The next day, January 6th, 1847 Tyagaraja had given up his body, merging with the Lord, forever!

Two Well Known Disciples of Tyagaraja

By: Hari Santhanam, 9, of Srutilayam Music School

Saint Tyagaraja had 30 direct disciples. Each of them did a lot to preserve his music and also propagate it. Here I will present the work of two of his disciples; Veena Kuppayyar and Walajapet Venkataramana Bhagavatar.

Veena Kuppayyar was born in the state of Tamil Nadu, in the town of Tiruvottiyur. His father, Sambamoorti Sastri played the violin and the veena. He learned how to play from his father. Later he became a student of Tyagaraja and learned how to compose songs. He knew how to speak Telugu and Sanskrit perfectly. He played violin well but, people started calling him Veena Kuppayyar because he played the veena very well.

Later Veena Kuppayyar moved to Muthialpet in Madras. Kovur Sundara Mudaliar was his supporter and Veena Kuppayyar enjoyed being his musician. Tyagaraja visited Veena Kuppayyar in Muthialpet, Madras. Kuppayyar taught lots of students helping spread Tyagaraja's krithis and music. Veena Kuppayyar composed his songs in Telugu. One varanam that is famous is saami ninne kori. Veena Kuppayyar's songs are identified by his mudra, Gopaaladaasa.

Some of Veena Kuppayyar's other compositions are: Inta Paralekha (Begada - Rupaka), Vinayaka Ninnuvina(Hamsadvani), Inta Chalamu (Begada), Inta Chouka(Bilahar), Nenarunchi(Danyasi), Koniyaadina (Kambhoji).

Walajapet Venkataramana Bhagavatar was an important student of Tyagaraja. Venkataramana Bhagavatar was a disciple from Ayyampettai a town near Tiruvaivaru and did secretary work for him. He was associated with Tyagaraja for over 25 years. He knew Sanskrit and Telugu. His son Krishnaswamy Bhagavatar learned from Tyagaraja too. Father and son wrote down the information and the events of Tyagaraja's life for 35 years. They wrote about Tyagaraja's visits to famous temples.

Father and son preserved most of Tyagaraja's krithis for the future. Thanks to them we know that Tyagaraja wrote three operas- Pahlada bhakti vijayam, Nauka charitram, and Sitarama vijayam. The musical world is very lucky that the father and son preserved Tyagaraja's compositions. They taught students and spread Thygaraja's krithis and songs. Some of Venkataramana Bhagavatar's compositions are:

Sri Guru ashtakam - in Sanskrit (Dhyana slokams)

Tyagaraja and Muthuswami Dikshitar are like *Ganga* and *Jamuna*, two of our most celebrated rivers that rise not too far from each other in the foothills of Himalayas but travel in parallel paths for nearly nine hundred miles before meeting in Prayag and continuing their journey to the sea. Legend has it that a third river *Saraswati* also joins the other two, running underground as *guptagamini*. Shyama Shastri, the eldest of the *trimurtis* is said to have composed only 108 kritis (some put it at 300) of which only a dozen or so are in currency but they are of such exquisite quality that he is accorded an honored place along with the other two composers. With the confluence of these three, what a swell we have of life sustaining music!

WORD SCRAMBLE—By Dinakar Subramanian

Word Scramble

Solve each word. Then use letters in the circled squares from each word to solve the puzzle below.

C M U I S	A A T L M	M A A G R
<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
RI K T I	O I L V N I	D O N U S
<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>

What your music teacher wants you to do?

“SING IN SRUTI”

SOUND
VIOLIN
KRITI
RAGAM
TALAM
MUSIC

Answer:

concert by no less an authority than Venkatamakhi, because of its Persian origin! I am not suggesting that everyone should like Hindusthani music. I am only suggesting that we be aware of how things evolve. What is taboo today may become "classical" in a later age.

It was this same eclectic attitude that made Dikshitar experiment with western music and compose early in his life what is referred to as "Nottusvara Sahitya." Dr. Durga states that at the request of a European collector Dikshitar composed forty songs with Sanskrit text set to the tunes of famous western songs, one of them being *Santatam Pahimam*, set to the tune of "God save the King." It was again such openness of mind and musical acumen that led him to recognize the vast potentiality of the western violin as a suitable instrument for Karnatak music and encouraged his disciple Balu to learn it. Considering that the violin has never gained the prominence in Hindusthani music that it has in Karnatak music, one might argue that it must be the result of Dikshitar's early endorsement in its behalf.

One of the artistic innovations of Tyagaraja that has become a standard feature of Karnatak music is the concept of *sangatis*. This provides an opportunity for the performer to embellish the kriti at suitable points. Tyagaraja kritis offer great flexibility for expanding on the kriti through sangatis, neraval and kalapana svaras and this is one of the main reasons for their enormous popularity with the performers. However, this very same flexibility could work against the composer, if not handled judiciously. Typically in today's Karnatak music concerts the alapana is becoming ever shorter, with the performer investing all the time and energy on the kriti. Unless the various aspects of kriti rendering are properly balanced, there is a possibility in this practice that the performer gains the center stage and the composer recedes to the background. Unfortunately, this seems to happen to Tyagaraja quite often, which makes me ask: are we being fair to him? Aren't we treating Tyagaraja rather loosely, on our own terms rather than on *his*? This is less likely to happen in the case of a Dikshitar kriti. Because of its more compact structure, its identity is better preserved. In this respect, his kritis are more like the works of composers of Western music.

Present day Karnatak musicians, accustomed as they are to fast paced singing, find it exacting to render Dikshitar kritis in slow tempo as originally intended. Neither do the audiences seem to have the patience for it. As for the composers, most of them tend to pattern the kriti as a whole after Tyagaraja but unfortunately the text tends to be most commonplace, devoid of any personal statement or poetic flights of imagination. They want to play it safe by stringing together names of the deity, clichés and catch-all phrases denoting bhakti. I wonder sometimes would any new composer dare start a kriti with words like "*enta muddo, enta sogaso!*" as Tyagaraja did in that lovely Bindumalini kriti or ask Rama to give him a kiss as he did in *Rara Sitaramanimanohara* ("*Oka muddeera, dhira!*").

Sri Guru Mangalashtakam - in Telugu
 Adi Guru Ashtotra Panchangam - in Telugu
 Sri Kakarlanvaya Ratnashara - a text in Manipravalam (in Sanskrit, Telugu and Sourashtram)
 Gurucharanam bhajare - Sankarabharanam-Adi (a kriti)
 Tyagaraja had great trust in Venkataramana Bhagavata. Tyagaraja knew ahead of time when his last day on earth would be, so he left behind his puja idols for Venkataramana Bhagavata. Unfortunately Pushya bahula panchami was the last day Tyagaraja breathed. Tyagaraja's personal items have been preserved even to this day. Pushya bahula panchami is in January and is an important day for Tyagaraja Aradhanas all over the world.

Tyagaraja Aradhana Around the World:

By: Ashraya Ananthanarayana,7, of Srutlayam Music School

The 'Thygaraja aradhana' is celebrated every year on Pushya Bagula Panchami day in Thiruvaiyaru where Shri. Tyagaraja attained his Samadhi. The Festival today is not only celebrated in Thiruvaiyaru, India but all over the world in different ways. In India several artists perform the Pancha Ratna and Utsav kritis at the Samadhi of the legend on the banks of river cauvery in Thiruvaiyaru.

After India, comes the most popular destination, Singapore, where every year the Tyagaraja Aradhana is celebrated in a big way. Apart from SIFAS(Singapore Indian Fine Arts Society) celebrating its Aradhana at the Esplanade Hall every year, this year (2008) the SYAMA Academy has also undertaken the task of conducting the Aradhana at the Sri. Krishnan Temple of Singapore in a grand manner in the months of Jan and Feb.

In America the popular one would be the Cleveland, Ohio Tyagaraja Aradhana Music festival. In USA it is celebrated sometime in March so it can also be said that the flowers of spring bring along with it the fragrance of Shri.Tyagaraja. . The inauguration of the festival is done with the rendering of Utsav kritis followed by the Pancha Ratna Kritis. Over 45 concerts are held during the festival along with various senior artists giving lecture demonstrations , workshops and Bharatnatyam performances to the budding and inspired talents.

The Sydney, Australia Music circle run by a group of voluneteers is known for hosting the festival sometime like the American celebration, always in March. I guess Easter weekend proves to be an important weekend for Indians too in Australia with the joyous celebrations of the festival. The year 2005 is unforgettable for me due to the very unique theme - 'Rare compositions of Tyagaraja and compositions in rare Ragas'. Though difficult, I believe the teachers and students of Australia stood up to the challenge and performed several rare ragas like malavasri, sindhunamakriya, pratapavarali etc. A very well known

festival and almost every Indian family attends it proves it that Shri. Tyagaraja lives forever in our minds.

The Shri Balaji temple of England, UK is yet another popular place where the Aradhana is celebrated in a very joyful manner during the first week of March. Apart from the rendering of the kritis by the group they also like the other places encourage student talent display in the field of Carnatic Music. There is always a popular Carnatic group called from India for giving concerts during this celebration. Likewise The Aradhana is celebrated with great joy by carnatic music organizations all around the world like Canada, UAE, Dubai or I should say everywhere where you could find Indians.

I am very proud to be an Indian carrying the legacy of our rich culture, talent and tradition generation after generation. Shri.Tyagaraja truly a gift from the heaven above.

The Gold GEM

By: Aarthy Ananthanarayanan, Artistic Director, Srutilayam Music School

Shri. Tyagaraja the Father of Carnatic Music was born to Raamabrahmam and Seetamma on May 4th 1767 in the Telegu Vaidika family in Thiruvarur. As his name itself suggests Thyaga-Raja means the 'Prince of Renunciation' a person who gives up all worldly desires. Shri.Tyagaraja's renunciation could be seen in the form of his deep devotion to Lord Ramaa.

Shri. Tyagaraja began his musical career when he was 15 years old under Sonti VenkaTaraamanayya. It is also told that apart from learning under his Guru he learnt and mastered several songs from his mother Seetamma. When he sang his 'Seetamma mayamma - Sri Ramuduma tandri', one could definitely appreciate his deep love and respect for his mother and his Lord Ramaa. The Kriti was set to Vasantaa Ragam in Roopaka Talam. The Pallavi of the song "sltamma mAyamma shri rAmuDu mA taNDri "really brings out the tears of Love: The meaning being: O Mind (manasa)! Seetha Devi is my mother (amma). Sri Rama is my father (tandri).

He was totally against "Narastuti" praise of men for profit or benefit. The foundation pillar of the Hindu system proclaims that Knowledge should not be weighed against any sort of wealth, profit or benefits. He believed in the GURUKUL system. History shows a few incidents whereby the disciples came to grief with Shri. Tyagaraja for insisting on payment of GURU DHAKSHINA. For his rich, immortal, priceless knowledge and talent he would have been flooded with gifts, honors and wealth but he did not choose to have any of the above but only one gift that he happily embraced which was brought by his one disciple, Wallajah Venkataramana, a picture of Rama.

Based on his value system and principles he used to go singing from street to street and begging for rice. Once when he was doing so a

Dikshitar was an inveterate traveler, far more so than Tyagaraja, going on pilgrimages, visiting temples, and composing kritis in praise of local deities. I wonder if this practice, in addition to giving him knowledge of sculpture and mythology and iconography, even artistically influenced the architecture of his kritis.

The fact that Dikshitar most effectively integrated some elements of Hindusthani music into the Karnatak system should demonstrate his open artistic temperament and receptivity to new ideas, while being a traditionalist to the core. Clearly the independent spirit of a great artist is at work here. He has composed kritis in some 22 *desiya* ragas some of which were still evolving in his time. I feel amused when I see some self-styled "purists" disapprovingly shake their heads when they notice some infusion of Hindusthani shades in a Karnatak music concert. But then they must hold Dikshitar guilty of the same offense! They probably forget that Kalyani which is considered a major raga in Karnatak music now was once condemned as unfit for presentation in a

Thyagaraja Day Puzzle - By Sriranjani Srinivasan

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C I L A R A V Z F M A Y A Z W
A B U I C P W G J N D Q T Z F
Q G X D X L W F T F J Y A P E
E P T Y N R J A P H G A N S X
C W G I X A R L U Y S K B X F
A B I R R A W N R T A B B Z J
C R N A H X T H X A U X X G V
S G B C T H Y A G A R A J A R
O H N A L D Z U S W A K W Y X
I A K Y L P K Q H R S B K Y X
P D G M I U Y L C E H R Y Z Q
C N X H B D A Z Q R T P T T E
O P L X L E I G J X R M O T R
P L T C H M H P N S A Y W G D
G Q L N L J O J L R M Z J A M

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ARABHI
GAULA
NATA
PANCHARATNA
SAURASHTRAM
SRI
THYAGARAJAR
VARALI

structure, open and clustered places, areas of light and shade, and carefully places various components to produce a unified, balanced and harmonious whole, Dikshitar builds an extraordinary structure in the space of the raga, making the abstraction of raga into a reality, as it were. The concept and development of raga, and its fullest expositions are the hallmark of his compositions. And each kriti is complete, like a well designed and executed piece of architecture, the result of the work of master craftsman, not of a passing emotion. Dikshitar is a master at being impersonal, even a bit distant and awe-inspiring may be, and yet can take you on one of the most satisfying journeys of your life through the wonderful world of raga. I remember the feeling I had when I first heard his *Nayaki* kriti, *Ranganayakam*; its effect lingered in me for days.

An image that often comes to my mind when I hear Dikshitar's kritis is that of a magnificent temple. As you get through the main entrance, you see a vast courtyard. The slow tempo of his kritis suggests the vastness of space and an unhurried exploration of it. Dikshitar guides you through that space, showing you various features of the temple, the magnificent courtyard, the superbly sculptured pillars, the friezes depicting episodes from the mythology of the main deity, the images of other deities and finally into the *garbhagudi*, the *sanctum sanctorum*. Dikshitar would want you to spend a lot of time in the temple, taking in each aspect of the edifice, enjoying the beauty of the sculptures and understanding the mythology and iconography, and finally going through the spiritual experience of worship. He wouldn't want you to rush through it all. He would want you to take it as a pilgrimage in itself.

I have often wondered what factors might have shaped his temperament (*manodharma*) that led to certain choices that characterize his kritis. The slower tempo of the kriti and a gradual development of the raga are clearly the influence of the *dhruvad* style of Hindusthani music to which he must have been exposed when he was in Benares completing his tutelage under Chidambaranatha Yogi. Even granting that slower tempo and elaborate exposition of raga were not uncommon in Karnatak music of those days (can you believe it!), the influence of Hindusthani music can be easily seen otherwise. Recall the kritis in Dwijavanti, Brindavana Saranga, etc. If you compare the kritis *Kamalaptakula* of Tyagaraja and *Rangapuravihara* or *Soundararajam* of Dikshitar, you will see vastly different treatments of the same raga. Tyagaraja's treatment seems rather limited while that of Dikshitar reaches out to the frontiers.

Another factor that might have influenced his choice of the slower tempo could be that he was a *vainika*. A slow tempo is ideally suited for exposition on veena. Although Tyagaraja was also known to be a veena player, he was essentially a vocalist. He is said to have possessed a wonderful voice that ranged over three octaves. His kritis also seem to have been fashioned for faster, higher-pitched vocal rendering.

Sage named Haridas came up to him and requested him to recite the name of Lord Ramaa 960 million times. Shri. Tyagaraja felt honored and happy for having got an opportunity to chant the name of his Almighty Lord Ramaa several times and did so with a pleasing smile. After performing he went to offer his prayers to Lord Ramaa when he suddenly heard a knock at the door. When he opened the door he saw Lord Ramaa, Sita and Hanumaan entering his prayer room. Tears of Joy and respect clouded his eyes and he was so moved with devotion that he sang the "Baalakanagamaya"

In another incident when he went to the Thirupathi temple for the Dharshan of the lord the shrine was closed. In sadness, he sang "Teratiyagaraadaa". Everybody around him in the temple were astonished when they saw the temple door opening by itself and the lord giving a bright Dharshan for Saint Tyagarajar. In his happiness of seeing the lord he sang the "VenkaTEsha ninu sEvimpa"

To get to listen to a song by the composer himself would be a great privilege. It is said that he used to constantly develop new ragaas and kritis. Though he composed 24,000 pieces, only around 1,800 kritis of Shri. Tyagaraja, are known to us today. It is said that he availed of 250 ragas and he was known for having used more than 60 ragas in his kirtanas. History has also got the opportunity to witness his Musical plays 'Prahallada Bhakthi Vijaya' and 'Nauka Charitra'.

Tyagaraja's compositions also included the Ghana Raaga Pancaratnam (5 gems) in raagams naattai, gowLa, aarabi, shreeragam, and varaaLi. He had a very soft heart towards his disciples and always loved to fulfill their wishes. When he visited TiruvOTTiyoor at the request of his disciple Veenai Kuppayyar, he sang the TiruvOTTiyoor Pancaratnam. At the invitation of his disciple LaalguDi Raamayya, he composed the LaalguDi Pancaratnam. He also composed the Shreeranga Pancaratnam in praise of Ranganata of Shreerangam and 5 kritis in praise of Sage Naarada. All his kritis are a delight to the ear and are extremely rich in quality, variety, taalams, bhavams, spiritual values and emotions.

As Suddhananda Bharathi said, 'Tyagaraja is the temple of Ram Nam - Ram Kokilam - who warbles the glory of Rama from honey-dropping arbor of music. He is a Mira in motion, a Kabir in devotion, a Purandara Dasa in music and a Nammalwar in vision.'

Tyagaraja Day

By Sumitra Jagadesan-Age:9, student of Smt. Vidya Sridhar

I started carnatic music when I was about five years old. My interest in carnatic music is that I love to sing, and I wish I could be a famous carnatic singer and composer like Tyagaraja. I love carnatic music because its fun to sing and I can learn about Indian classical music. I've been singing carnatic music for three years, and I sang in the

Tyagaraja aradhana twice. Tyagaraja was born on May 4, 1767 and he died on Jan 6, 1847. So I sang in the Tyagaraja aradhana to celebrate his great life. I sang four of Tyagaraja's songs they were Giriraja, Buntorithi Golo, and Kalaharana. Tyagaraja is a very famous singer, and we should all help keep him famous and we should keep singing all his wonderful songs. The fact that Tyagaraja composed his first song at age eight got me interested. I also found out that most of Tyagaraja's song has his name at the end of his it. I'm grateful that though I'm all the way here I can still learn Tyagaraja's songs. All of Tyagaraja's songs are very nice and I wish I could learn all of his songs one day.

Tyagaraja

Sashank Sridhar, 6, student of Smt. Vidhya Sridhar

I started learning Adi Talam from my Grandma. I started learning Carnatic Music from my Mom. One thing my Mom taught me is to sing out of your belly. My mom also taught me about the great composer Tyagaraja. She taught me three kritis of Tyagaraja. My favorite one is Bantu reethi koluin ragam hamasanadham. One thing I learnt about Tyagaraja is that his favorite God was Rama. Tyagaraja is my favorite composer. I hope I learn more about him and his songs.

TYAGARAJA

By Suhana Jagadesan, 9, student of Smt. Vidhya Sridhar

One of the greatest and most dedicated composers of India is Tyagaraja. He was a dedicated devotee to Rama and spent his time composing songs of Rama and praising the holy god himself. Many of us celebrate a special day where we sing and praise this outstanding composer. This day is known as Thyagadraja Aradna. The songs that he composed warmed people's heart with joy. As a devoted singers of Rama, most of his songs were dedicated to him. His main purpose was to become one with Rama, to be with Rama, and to please Rama with his heartfelt songs. Although his life ended on January 6, 1847, his spirit lives on. Tyagaraja must be kept alive by all of us, the newer generation. By working together we can cherish every minute, every moment, and every song that he has composed for our enjoyment. This journey has taken me far, because now I realize that Tyagaraja has done more than singing or composing, he has created a pathway of music for us all.

Tyagaraja Day

By Pranav Kunapuli, student of Smt. Kiranavali VidyaShankar

Tyagaraja day is the day where we celebrate the birth of one of carnatic music's greatest composers. To me, it means a day of appreciation of the gift that Tyagaraja has given us - the gift of music. On this

everyday form. This again gives his compositions tremendous sustaining power. We have seen this phenomenon in the case of a few other composers as well, such as Purandara Dasa, another great communicator, who composed in Kannada, the language of the people.

Dikshitar conceives music not so much as a means of communication but as a means of adoration and worship of the godhead. Of course, there is communication in all great art and Dikshitar's music is no exception. But the dominant goal is worship. Further, the worship is conceived in an established traditional manner. The emphasis is entirely on the subject of the kriti. There is rarely a reference to any personal feelings of ecstasy or anguish as one finds so commonly in Tyagaraja. True, Tyagaraja has composed *utsava sampradaya kritis* that are actually sung as part of worship. But these also reflect various aspects of a devotee's personal relationship with the Supreme One. In Dikshitar's kritis this personal element is sublimated into an impersonal relationship. One sees in Dikshitar, a highly disciplined mind, attuned to performing a long ritualistic worship or *upasana*. The mood is serene and contemplative.

Unlike Tyagaraja, Dikshitar composed in Sanskrit, the language of the sacred texts, the medium used by the intellectuals and keepers of esoteric knowledge. The texts of the kritis are composed in adoration of the deities and consist of their names and words and phrases describing their various attributes, strung together somewhat like the texts of the famous *strotras* (prayers). He had an encyclopedic knowledge of various fields and drew his material from Vedanta, puranas and tantric sources, and *jyotisha* (astrology). He was a man of ideas and is perhaps the only one to bring in ideas from so many different fields. He refers to concepts and practices and terms established by traditional forms of worship. (You may recall even in the very familiar *vatapi ganapatim bhaje*, there are phrases like *trikonamadyagatam* that are abstruse to lay people.) He employs all the six *angas* or component sections of *strotra* literature, namely, *namaha* (salutation), *asi* (blessing), *siddhanta* (active affirmation), *parakrama* (mighty deeds of the deity) and *dhyana* (meditation) (see S.A.K. Durga, Muthuswami Dikshitar, Sruti Ranjani, Sruti, Ed. Viji Swaminathan, 2003, pp.123-131). He naturally felt Sanskrit was the most suitable vehicle for his purpose.

If Dikshitar's kritis were just *strotras*, even granting they were beautiful, they would not have excited the attention of music lovers for generations as they have and perhaps we wouldn't be talking about them nearly two centuries later from a different continent. They would have been regarded as no more than mantras or *strotras* used in everyday worship and left at that. But the amazing thing is the genius of Dikshitar has transformed them into some of the most magnificent kritis of Karnatak music.

Dikshitar's vision, it seems to me, was that of an architect. Even as a great architect visualizes the arrangement of space and

they gave expression to it they were different. Here we have the mystical Tyagaraja, sensitive and lyrical, who through his songs conveys the cry of supplication of millions of his fellow beings. And there is Muthuswami Dikshitar, sophisticated and erudite, intellectual and somewhat impersonal, but amazingly rich in raga conception and development, and whose majestic kritis fill you with a different kind of musical experience. That these two musicians were contemporaries, and lived not too far from each other and yet were so vastly different in their styles is a tribute to their creative genius and independence of spirit. At the same time, the fact that the discerning listening public of Karnatak music long ago recognized their genius and accorded both of them the highest place of honor is a tribute to their own musical sensibility. Too often, however, we tend to think of the *trimurtis* one-dimensionally. Dikshitar forces us to think otherwise. I would like to share some of my thoughts on the matter with my fellow Sruti members. I must preface it by saying I offer them only as tentative remarks, in the spirit of opening an arm chair discussion (which is the best I can do after all, considering my limited knowledge!), rather than as conclusions from a serious study of the subject. It is rather like a sketch for a portrait than the portrait itself.

Tyagaraja has become an iconic figure in Karnatak music. His name is almost synonymous with the system itself. He lived the longest of the three and is the most prolific of all our composers. He also was a great teacher who trained and nurtured a dedicated band of disciples who preserved and propagated his legacy. He is the touchstone of quality by which we measure other composers, except perhaps the other two of the *trimurtis*, Shyama Shastri and Muthuswami Dikshitar. But even there comparisons are constantly being made, although not so much to establish the superiority of any one over the others but to gain greater insights into their extraordinary musical genius.

Music was a means of communication to Tyagaraja. He constantly communicated with his own inner self and Rama, his *ishta-devatha*, and that communication found outward expression and reached his fellow beings in the form of a song. You might recall how frequently Tyagaraja uses the word *manasaa* in his compositions. He speaks to himself, communicating his thoughts from one part of his consciousness to another part as it were, all the time keeping the image of Rama in his mind. It is as though he has Rama as a witness to every thought that goes through his own mind. Rama is his dearest god, his master, his closest friend and confidant. There is nothing he wouldn't tell him. He may burst out in ecstasy or cry out in anguish, he may sing his praise or speak of his own frustration. It is these aspects that have given Tyagaraja kritis a lyrical quality and an immediate emotional appeal and create in the listeners a feeling of personal closeness, a feeling that Tyagaraja is articulating our own feelings. And the language he used for communication was Telugu, his mother tongue, in a simple

day, Tyagaraja's kritis are meant to be sung as expression of gratitude, beauty, and glory. My personal favorite is titled Ksheera Saagara in raga *aananda bhairavi*. I enjoy this song because of its beauty, not only is the swaras, but also in the meaning. This means as much to me as it did to Tyagaraja, for Tyagaraja was strong devotee of Sri Venkateswara or Lord Vishnu. This is what Tyagaraja Day means to me.

Tyagaraja Day

By Veena Kanumalla, 13, student of Smt. Kiranavali VidyaShankar

Tyagaraja Aradhana is really important because it's a day where people come together to listen to and enjoy his kritis. Recently, I have learned quite a few new kritis composed by Tyagaraja, but if I had to pick my favorite, it would be *Idisamayamura* in the raga *Chayanata*. One of the highlights of the raga is that it has a jump in the arohanam from P to S. And throughout the song, there are many such jumps. If one has the ability to make this jump with precision, it would add to the beauty of the raga and the composition. This is one of the amazing aspects of Tyagaraja's compositional style - to introduce little bits of challenges and excitement into his kritis. I learned the *Pancharatna* kriti from my guru, Kiranavali Vidyasankar more than a year ago. Now that I'm slowly understanding each kriti better, I can appreciate the greatness of Tyagaraja even more. It is an ongoing journey.

Why I like Tyagaraja Aradhana

By: Priyanka Dinakar, a student of Smt. Kiranavali Vidyashankar.

I have been singing at Tyagaraja Aradhana for the past two years and I am looking forward to doing it this year. Before I started to participate I just came to play with friends, but when I started to participate I realized the importance of Tyagaraja Aradhana. Tyagaraja is one of the composers in the Trinity of Carnatic music. The Aradhana is an occasion to pay respect to the great saint.

The first time I was going to sing, I was nervous because I was singing in front of so many people, but when I got up on stage I realized there was nothing to be scared of. The second time I sang I was not as scared because I had sung the year before.

I have always enjoyed watching people sing, especially the people I know. When I see them and like what they sing, I try to see myself singing as well as them. In my first year, I sang *Ramuni Maravakave* in *Kedaragowla* and also watched other students of my father sing. My father also taught me at that time.

The second time I sang *Varaleela Ganalola* in *Shankara-baranam*. It was reassuring to have my teacher Kiranavali Aunty sitting in the first row. Now I enjoy sitting in concerts with the other students that learn from Kiranavali Aunty.

I like to watch the Pancharatna Kriti's because I like the raagams they are composed in. I also like watching it because I will be able to learn from the songs. I will be able to learn from the songs that other people sing as well. I have been identifying raagams for some-time now, and the more songs I listen to the more I learn. I try to identify raagams at concerts, but if I cannot identify them, I try to find the raagam they are closest to. I am looking forward to doing the same for this Tyagaraja Aradhana and for many more to come.

Tyagaraja Kritis

By Smt. Latha Suresh, Director, Sangeethalaya School of Music).

Tyagaraja krithis have added value two ways from the perspective of a teacher. As a learning tool the student is benefited from the krithis of simpler structure progressing towards the more complex and colorful ones. As a teacher, imparting the full impact of the krithis repetitively has made me delve deeper into the annals of the saint's life; the circumstances he faced, the bhakthi rasa that emanated from him and so on. And so, one ponders: Tyagaraja krithis do add value to our lives but do we add enough value to others lives by propagating them?

Neha, a lover of Tyagaraja Kritis

By Neha Nataraj, student of Smt. Kiranavali Vidyashankar.

Tyagaraja Aaradhana is important to me because songs are a part of me. Sri Tyagaraja's expressive, complex songs move me greatly, and it feels good to see so many people-particularly children-putting effort into singing his beautiful compositions. I have two favorite songs of his. My first is "Sara sara samaraikashoora." I love this song because it is quick and playful. I have heard this song played by Chitibaabu on the veena. I am fond of this version because the characteristics of the lively veena correspond to this spirited song.

My second favorite song is "Bhuvini Daasudane." I find Sri Ranjini a very captivating and enchanting raga. The notes in this song are put together very nicely, and I love this song. I have listened to Dr. Balamurali Krishna's version, which made me persuade my mother to teach me the song.

What I Like to Sing – By Sidarth Nama , 7

I have learned some Thyagaraja Kritis, but I am yet to learn Shyama Shastry's kritis. When I sing Thyagaraja's songs, (and if I understand the meaning), the stories in the Ramayana come to life with the songs. My Mom and I use these songs to make "Harikatha" stories. I am doing one Harikatha this year about the power of Bhakti.

I like sad raagams. My favorite raagam is Panthuvrali. It is

meal, after enjoying the fruits of wealth, after enjoying the company of good people, etc. Once again, the correlation seems to hold up quite well – that Tyagaraja uses *Bilahari* to express his feelings of contentment, gratitude, peace and happiness.

The *kriti* "*Kori sevincha*", there appears to be a softly happy mood, although it is a fairly standard theme of praise to the Lord and contains some beautiful similies. For instance, he says that Rama's mercy is like a seed to the mind, that Rama is like a pot filled fully with superior qualities, etc.

In "*Narasimha*", we see a different theme, but one which is found in many of his compositions in general. That is, he is pleading for the mercy of *Lakshmi Narasimha* to take care of him, at a time when people are casting blame and accusations against him and that the Lord would protect him as He did for *Prahlada*, etc. So, we do not see the exuberance or contentment here, although the quality of the pleading is warmer and not soaked in sadness.

Finally, in "*Toli Janmamu*" *kriti*, we see a full round about of this correlation thesis! Here Tyagaraja reverts to self-criticism sounding almost like self-abasement. He refers to his 'despicable acts of the past', the 'baneful effects of his deeds', and himself as a 'sin-ridden soul'[3].

There is no happiness in these lyrics. What happened to my theory? What happened to the correlation between Happiness and *Bilahari*?

I thought I was onto something - almost a 'proof'. Oh, well!

Acknowledgements: The author would like to thank Vasant Kumar Nagulapalli, who promptly reviewed the article and made several useful suggestions for improvement.

[1] "*Sangitha Jagadguru Sri Tyagaraja Kirthanalu – Prathama Samputam*" by Bhavaraju Narasimharao and T.S. Parthasarathy, published by Triveni Publishers, Machilipatnam, AP, India, 1983.

[2] "*Tyagaraja Keertanulu – Vol I,*" by Kalluri Veerabhadra Shastri, published by Swadharma Swaarajya Sanghamu, 10 Padma Rao Nagar, Secunderabad, AP/ 95, Broadway, Chennai 1, 1975.

[3] "*Compositions of Tyagaraja*", by T.K. Govinda Rao, Ganamandir Publications, India, 1995.

[4] "*Tyagaraja: Life and Lyrics*", by William Jackson, Oxford University Press, Madras, 1991.

TYAGARAJA AND MUTHUSWAMI DIKSHITAR – Two Great Composers of Diverse Nature—by H.Y. Rajagopal

When you think of the *trimurtis* of Karnatak music, you cannot but be struck by how diverse Tyagaraja and Muthuswami Dikshitar are in their approach to music and styles of composition, despite sharing many common elements. Bhakti or devotion to god guided every step of their lives but even in the type of bhakti they embodied and the way

and/or the society) or melancholic type or (as Prof. Jackson points out in [4]) on music itself. Few, I think, are of true and simple happiness or joy.

Having said that, let me now ask the question: Are the lyrics of all of Thyagaraja's *kritis* in *Bilahari* expressing happiness and joy?

By my count, 10 *Bilahari* compositions of Tyagaraja are available today. They are: *Kanugontini*; *Dorakuna*; *Intakanna Anandamemi*; *Najivadhara*; *Korivachchitinayya*; *Narsimha Nannu*; *Nivegani Nannu*; *Sarasiru Nayana*; *Vasudeva Vara* and *Toli Janmam*.

I already made a case that the first two songs are filled with happiness and cheer. Interestingly, "*Intakanna*" is also a rare song in which Tyagaraja is expressing sublime happiness that he felt, during his states of meditation and *puja*. He talks about the joy in *nada-anubhava* (experience of the internal source of music), the state when he is oblivious to the physical body with its distracting senses and becomes one with the Universal Entity. He goes on to say that in this state of meditateness, the varied worlds shine as a single Paramathma. In the Hindu theological terminology, the word '*Ananda*' is a rather strong word expressing almost supernatural Joy and in this song, Tyagaraja is actually describing his experience of that Joy. (Another song where Tyagaraja uses this word is in "*Jagadaananda karaka*". However, here the usage seems to be a lighter application of the word).

Similarly, the lyrics of "*Naajivadhara*" are also very interesting, as he appears to be content and happy with himself and is projecting God in himself – as the sight of his eyes, as the fragrance smelt by his nose etc. It is well known that the music in this *kriti* is of the highest quality. It was written that this *kriti*, alongwith "*Darini Telusukonti*" in *Suddha Saveri*, are among the most musically sophisticated compositions with 7 and 8 challenging variations (*sangathis*) in their *Pallavis* alone. There is also an anecdotal account about this *kriti*. Unbelievable as it sounds, it is written that a person who was apparently dead after falling into a well was brought back to life on singing this song next to him. Is this another testimony to the invigorating power of *Bilahari* raga?

The lyrics of "*Nivegani*" appear to be written in a fairly content state of mind, in which Tyagaraja is gratefully acknowledging the grace showered on him and his family. For instance he says that the Lord has given him all that he ever asked for. He compares the Lord as his personal wealth that was acquired by the *tapas* of generations of his elders.

The lyrics of '*Vasudeva Vara*' are rather simple in their meaning and expression. They are almost like a simple *namavali* and I am tempted to conjecture that it was probably one of earlier compositions.

The lyrics of '*Sarasiruha nayana*' are quite amazing in the expression of complete contentment with himself and with the grace of Rama that feels to have enjoyed. He gives a long list of analogies, comparing to the feelings of contentment after having eaten a delicious

a sad raagam, but makes me feel "sadish happy" when I sing it. I think the "M" "N" in panthu varali make it sad. I love to end the panthuvarali with the following ending swaram that Mami taught me:
G..., RGR SRS NSN,DND, PMGR..., GND, NSND PMGR, MG rsn RS

Tyagaraja Aradhana: A Tradition in Transition

by Vidyasankar Sundaesan

The first thing that strikes me about Tyagaraja Aradhana celebrations in the USA is that it is one of the seminal unifying events in the cultural landscape of the diaspora of south Indians. I grew up in Mumbai, which is neither south Indian nor north Indian in its ethos. Every year, sometime in January, every cultural group with links to southern India would organize its own Tyagaraja Aradhana. Thus, in addition to the organizations that are dedicated solely to the performing arts, groups like the Tamil Sangam and the Andhra Mahila Sabha also used to organize their own events. The scenario in the metropolitan centers of the United States is quite different. Either due to lack of critical numbers in the Indian population or due to the sheer magnitude of organizing such an event, we do not generally see each linguistic group organizing its own Tyagaraja Aradhana. On the other hand, this is a day when we see musically oriented people of south Indian origin coming together to organize and participate in a celebration of Carnatic music, without splitting ourselves along linguistic lines. Another difference from Tyagaraja Aradhanas observed in India is that in the United States, we encourage and even emphasize the participation of children and students, instead of focusing on adults. This is a refreshing trend that needs to be nurtured, so long as our younger generation is encouraged to learn Carnatic music primarily for the sake of music and not merely for an opportunity to perform on stage!

That said, I also wonder about a few other dimensions of Indian cultural and social life that we seem to be losing here in the United States. Almost every Indian fine arts organization that organizes a day-long event with a prime position given to group singing of Tyagaraja's Pancharatna *Kritis* labels it as a "Tyagaraja Aradhana". Some also organize other events with significant community participation to honor other Carnatic music composers, particularly Muttuswami Dikshitar and Syama Sastri. However, these are usually billed in a more prosaic fashion using "Composers Day" or some such term, and only sometimes called an "Aradhana".

The reason for honoring Tyagaraja with an Aradhana is probably lost on most of us. Historically, Tyagaraja's immediate disciples and grand-disciples started observing his Aradhana at Tiruvaiyaru and the Carnatic music fraternity has kept up the tradition. The disciples of other composers like Dikshitar and Syama Sastri did not observe an Aradhana for their teachers. There is a religious reason behind this. Dikshi-

tar and Syama Sastri both died as householders whereas Tyagaraja became a Sannyasi in his last days. In Hindu tradition, a Sannyasi's body is interred, not cremated, and no annual Sraddha rituals are conducted. Rather, his death anniversary is observed as an Aradhana, with Puja rituals similar to those conducted in a temple. Of course, just like in the case of the householder, the date of the Sannyasi's death anniversary is also determined according to the Indian lunar calendar. Today, most of us do not know to keep up with the idiosyncrasies and complications of the Indian lunar calendar and have instead got very comfortable with the common solar-based calendar. Even for major festivals, we often resort to observing them on the nearest possible weekend. In the case of Tyagaraja Aradhana, each city organizes it according to convenience, the date having no relationship to Tyagaraja's actual anniversary. Also, we honor the memory of Tyagaraja primarily through rendering his musical compositions and any Puja is incidental to the event. Under the circumstances, shouldn't we acknowledge that the word "Aradhana" is losing its meaning and that it serves merely as a placeholder for a name? Should we simply rename the event as "Tyagaraja Day"?

Reader opinion is invited, at <http://www.sruti.org/sruti/srutiBulletin.asp>.

A Masterpiece by St. Sri Tyagaraja

Authors: Vijaya & Rama Kunapuli live in Los Angeles, CA

Ragam: Jayanthasri, 20 naTabhairavi janya

Talam: Aadi

Aa: S G2 M1 D1 N2 S **Av:** S N2 D1 M1 P M1 G2 S

Pallavi: Marugelara O Raghavaa

Anupallavi: Marugela Charaachara Roopa
Paraatpara Surya Sudhakara Lochana

Charanam: Anni Neevanuchu Antharangamuna
Thinnagaa Vedaki Thelisi Kontinayya...
Ninnegaani Madi Nennajaalanorula
Nannu Brovumayya Tyagarajanuta

Pallavi:

Marugelara: Why have you become hidden, why have you become imperceptible?

O Raghava: descendent of Raghu vamsa.

AnuPallavi:

Chara: animate

Achara: inanimate

Roopa: form

Vira-rasa raga, capable of expressing, power, valor and action. It corroborates with my own experience. On the other hand, I think *Sankarabharanam* raga can and tends to express calmness and peace – without any touches of melancholy. Indeed, the name of the raga seems to have been aptly chosen – the jewel of *Sankara*, which is a combination of the words *Sam* and *Kara*, meaning one who produces internal peace.

I wonder if the contrasting emotional aspects of these two ragas can perhaps be justified by the simplistic observation that *Mohana* is made of 5 notes and *Sankarabharanam* of 7 notes within an octave (a span of frequencies where the highest frequency, namely the higher S, is two times the lowest frequency, namely lower S). Thus, the notes are spaced closer in *Sankarabharanam* compared to *Mohana*. Thus one can produce smaller subtler transitions and tonal variations in *Sankarabharanam* than in *Mohana*. On the other hand, the tonal variations will tend to be larger in *Mohana*, leading to stronger and more powerful effects.

In any case, *Bilahari* raga combines these two contrasting structures, deriving out of that union the capacity to convey energy and cheer coupled with peace and tranquility. Perhaps one can make a quick energetic statement in the quick ascension and slide down on the rolling slopes of the tranquil *Sankarabharanam*. Perhaps it gives the composer the scope and freedom to execute very different strokes and paint a charmingly contrasting picture.

Let us take a quick look at the notes behind "*Kanugontini Sriramune, Nedu*". In quick ascension, [G,P,D,,,R#,S#,,,, = *Kanugontini*] Tyagaraja declares that he has discovered it! The presentation is quick, sharply rising and definitive. He then elaborates in the slow descending pace of *Sankarabharanam* [S#,N DP,, D,,N DP, MGR = *Sri Ramuni Nedu*] that he discovered 'Sri Rama today'.

It is somewhat similar in "*Dorakuna Ituvanti Seva*", where again the *pallavi* ascends in *Mohana* scale although a bit more slowly and descends with the slender beauty of *Sankarabharanam*. He sings [S,,,R,,,G,,,P,,, , , , , , , , D, D, R#, = *Dorakuna Itu*] in the ascending mode and then [S#, , , , , N, N, D, D, DP , , , , M, G, R, G, = *Vanti Seva*] in a smooth finish.

I humbly admit that the above analysis probably does extreme disservice to the word 'analysis'. It is as deep as a scratch made by the breeze on a rock and as definitive as the writing on water! Unaddressed here are the extensive *sangathis* and raga *prasthara*, which are oceans to explore. I shall leave this difficult area and come back to the question of a possible correlation between happiness expressed in lyrics of Tyagaraja's *kritis* and the *Bilahari* raga.

Firstly, let me make a questionable observation that ecstatic and joyous compositions of Tyagaraja are rare. My intuitive sense is that most songs are either of *Bhakti* type or reflective type (on himself

Tyagaraja was apparently still quite young, his music teacher, Sonthi Venkata Ramanayya invited Tyagaraja to come home and sing to the group of invitees, which included many local music *vidwans*. One can imagine that it was a special event for Tyagaraja and that he felt not only happy but also somewhat recognized and proud of his musical talents. It was at this time that he sang the song “*Dorakuna Ituvanti Seva*”. From [2], it appears that this *kriti* actually had been composed earlier and Tyagaraja chose it, perhaps partly due to the implied pun in the lyrics. The original context is claimed to be when Tyagaraja was doing *Uyyaala-seva*, where the idols of the Lord are placed in a swing and worship is offered through music and other means. In the *kriti*, Tyagaraja says that such an opportunity to serve the Lord is not obtained by even Gods and pious people that have done less than sufficient penance! He goes on in the three lengthy *charanams* to shower profusely and gloriously bountiful praise on the Lord and the service done by His many devotees. Here is an extract from [3]: “..Sages like *Narada* and *Thumburu* sing His praise in mellifluous strains. Devotees of the caliber of *Ambarisha* chant His name in ecstasy, worship with choice flowers. ... *Brahma* and *Indra* stand on either side proclaiming the Lord’s genealogy and titles sonorously. ..And there, on the gently swinging serpent couch adorned with ruby necklaces, is seated in regal splendor Sri Hari, the Transcendent Lord in all His majesty and glory....A shining golden shawl caresses His emerald green body, the radiance of feet and nails rivals that of the moon. Rich anklets adorn the feet. Diamond studded jewels adorn the two arms, pearl necklace adorn the chest, as ear rings sport around His ears, a faint smile radiates His face, as curly forelocks gambol veiling and unveiling the saffron mark on His forehead, mirror-like shining cheeks, the Embodiment of the entire world’s Beauty! ...”. Clearly, such colorful, joyous thoughts can only originate from a highly positively charged state of mind and obviously, Tyagaraja chose to express them in *Bilahari* raga.

Irrespective of one’s preference to various ragas, it is a commonly experienced fact that certain ragas tend to produce certain types of human emotions. In western musical terminology, minor scales are supposed to be more mellowed and expressive of sadness, unlike major scales. In our Carnatic musical classifications, listening to *Mohana* often produces cheer, while *Varali* puts one in a somber mood. In this sense, does *Bilahari* have an intrinsic characteristic to produce happiness? If so, it would be natural for Tyagaraja (or for that matter any other composer) to choose *Bilahari* to express happy thoughts and feelings.

The *arohana-avarohana* (ascension-descension) structure of *Bilahari* is sa-ri2-ga3-pa-da2-sa# and sa#-ni3-da2-pa-ma1-ga3-ri2-sa, making it an asymmetrical raga. The *arohana* part is identical to that of *Mohana* raga and the *avarohana* part is that of *Sankarabharanam*. Regarding *Mohana* raga, one of my music teachers characterized it as a

Paraatpara: Higher than the highest

Surya: Sun

Sudhakara: Moon

Lochana: Eyes

O Rama, why have you become imperceptible, even when you are the one with Sun and Moon as eyes, the embodiment of animate and inanimate world, and the Higher than the highest?

Charanam:

Anni: Everything

Neevu+anuchu: I assume you are (everything)

AntharangaMuna: within the innermost soul

Thinnagaa: straight \ directly

Vedaki: having searched

Thelisi kontini: came to realize \ learn

Ninne Gaani: nobody else other than you

Madi: mind

Nennajaala: contemplate on \ fixate on

Norula: others

Nannu: me

Brovum: Protect

Ayya: father

Thyagaraja-nuta: One praised by Tyagaraja.

By deep contemplation, inquiry, and search, I perceive you as everything, and everything is within you. There is no place in my mind for any body else other than You. I solicit your protection oh, my father.

My Thoughts on this krithi:

I am one of the many admirers of Tyagaraja, and would love to refer Him as Thyagayya - father of all His admirers. I cannot help contemplating on Tyagayya’s krithis consciously or subconsciously at all times. Always wonder ‘What was Thyagayya’s state of mind when he wrote each of the krithis.

Marugelara - one of the haunting melodies with rich lyrics that beg for more than a superficial analysis. The word-to-word translation may be good enough if we are interested in the literal meaning. However, if we dive little deep into this beautiful krithi, we will be left with the question as to why Tyagayya pleads with the Lord for His grace. We know Thyagayya wasn’t asking for any worldly things. The question I have here is ‘what is it that Tyagayya is pleading God’s grace for? Isn’t it ability to fix mind on God or Paramatma - the Supersoul? What else Thyagayya is asking for through this krithi?

In the AnuPallavi ‘*Charaachara Roopa Paraatpara*’, Tyagayya says Lord is in animate and inanimate objects and He is the highest of high. In the charanam ‘*Anni Neevanuchu Antharangamuna Thinnagaa Vedaki Thelisi Kontinayya*’, he claims he realized Lord in everything, everywhere, and deep within himself after intense searching - yet he pleads for His mercy.

Does it indicate, Thyagayya was able to intellectually understand and comprehend that the Lord is in everywhere and everything but was having difficulty staying in that state of mind? Was he having trouble meditating upon Him at all times? What was the agony Thyagayya was going through?

Is this a Divine vision wherein one experiences unity of everything - Something that results after intense meditations and prayer for the Lord? But then, he starts the song asking Lord Rama, why he is hiding from him.

Thyagayya's beatific visions of Lord Rama, perhaps, are fleeting. As he beautifully states in the song, he realized that Lord is behind everything. This infinite experience of Lord is perhaps alternated by finite experience. In the sense the beautiful visions stayed temporarily leaving a residue that germinates an intense desire to seek Lord's mercy. But why Lord's mercy?

It is known among people who meditate/pray consistently and sincerely on Lord that such fleeting glimpses come and go - a penultimate state before Self realization. Yet the last leap into realization depends entirely on Lord's Grace. That explains Thyagayya's pleading for Lord Rama's mercy.

Between finite and infinite experience, between the sweet visions and the loss, lies an agony that powered the lyrics and melody of this beautiful song. As Gita states "Among thousands, one perchance strives for perfection; even among successful strivers, only one perchance knows Me in essence". Thyagayya is certainly among select few who was on his way to realize "Me in essence".

Given his Genius, he left us with a Kriti that captures those states of mind, conveys those emotional moments so when we listen intensely enough, we experience a faint glimpse of the sacred moments.

Like one of our good friends 'Chitrapu garu' says may be 'is it not better to think about some questions rather than be fed with lots of answers. I try to put my inquisitive mind to rest for a while with this quote but I get back to the old question hoping to come to terms with my quest one day.

BHAKTHI – The Sum and Substance of Sri Tyagaraja's Music by Uma Sivakumar

Our humble offerings at the lotus feet of the revered musical saint. As we celebrate the 161st anniversary of Sri Tyagaraja Swami, it is worthwhile to reflect on the essence of his works that has stood the test of time and generations. One can call these a musical Revolution, but more importantly, they are a Revelation – of a higher guiding value. While the saint's composition may be a connoisseur's delight because of the lingual prowess and lyrical beauty, the aspect that penetrates the

body and stirs the soul is most certainly the "Bhakthi" component. As the master himself puts it, even the appreciation of music is the outcome of sincere devotion – Sangeetha GnAnamu Bhakthi vinA. Evidently, the saint himself practiced what he preached, sternly refusing to trade his bhakthi sangeetham for money, material or fame – Nithi chAla sukhamA.

Nothing in this mundane world is achieved without divine grace. In the Kali Yuga, singing the glory of God is the sure and simple way to success. This very aspect of Bhakthi – towards god, towards the guru, towards the elders and towards work – is exemplified astutely by the holy Saint's precious works. Let us resolve to reinforce our unconditional love and devotion towards the divine so that "Bhakthi" becomes the sum and substance of our very life.

The Raga of Tyagaraja's Happiness: *Bilahari?* *Prabhakar Chitrapu*

A long time ago, my alter-mother asked me what probably the favorite raga of Tyagaraja was. At that time, I was not much into Tyagaraja and Carnatic music. Either I pleaded ignorance or gave some random answer, which I now do not recall. She thought it was *Bilahari*. Because, his songs such as "*Kanugontini Sri Ramuni*" and "*Dorakuna Ituvanti Seva*" were obviously composed during very happy moments in his life and they were set in *Bilahari* raga. I could not argue with that.

Indeed, the anecdotal setting of "*Kanugontini Sri Ramuni*" is that the idols of Rama, Sita et al, which Tyagaraja did his daily *pujas* and *japas* to, were stolen by his jealous brother and thrown into the Cauveri river. This obviously must have plunged Tyagaraja into an abyss of depression and sadness. Indeed, there are compositions such as "*Endu Daaginaado`?*" in *Thodi* raga, "*Ne`nu Endu Vedakudu ra`?*" in *Karnataka Behag* raga etc, in which Tyagaraja laments his sad state and quest for the idols. After about 2 months [1], he apparently dreamt about the exact location of idols, following which he promptly reclaimed them. Considering how deeply Tyagaraja was devoted to Rama, one can only imagine the ecstatic state of his mind then. However, looking at the lyrics, one finds that there is little description of his personal feelings – it is a rather plain description of the image of Rama, surrounded by Sita, his brothers, Hanuman, Sugriva etc. Perhaps he was so positively shocked by the discovery of the idols that all he could do was to sing what he saw and had no time for personal reflections? In any case, the fact that the song he composed at that time was in *Bilahari* raga no doubt would make a strong association between the raga and Tyagaraja's expression of joy.

Similarly, the story associated with the composition "*Dorakuna Ituvanti Seva*" is well known and goes as follows. Tyagaraja lived in a small village called Thiruvaiyaru on the banks of river Cauvery. When