



SRUTI NOTES

SRUTI

The India Music & Dance Society

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From The Editors

Dear friends

In addition to the news and happenings in the world of music and dance and the events in our own community, this issue of Sruti Notes brings you reports and reviews of two of the three events that Sruti has presented this year. The various events of the Thyagaraja Aradhana day are reported in the President's letter and reviewed by Vasantha Narayanan and Poornima Narayan. We also bring you a review of T. N. Seshagopalan's concert by Rasikan. We thank all the writers for their contributions. The issue also includes articles on Rag Mala and Rag Mala Paintings and some musical forms of South India by LC staff.

In an effort to bring subjects of interest to the Sruti community to the forefront and encourage reader participation, we have revived the *Discussion Forum* which was introduced last year. We request you to send us your opinions on educating children and youth in the classical arts of India (see page 5 for details).

Starting with the next issue of Sruti Notes, contributions to the newsletter from juniors will be edited and managed by the juniors themselves. A group of young music and dance enthusiasts, some of whom have already been contributing to Sruti Notes, have eagerly volunteered to undertake the task. **Samitha Bhargava, Sowmya Menon, Chetan Ramamurthy and Sumanth Swaminathan** will be the editors of the junior section. Youngsters who would like to contribute articles, quizzes, puzzles and other items of interest may contact them through any of the Library Committee members or by sending an email to <sovereign620@hotmail.com>.

The Library Committee is currently working on a plan to bring out a special new millenium publication in the year 2001, which also happens to be the 15th anniversary of the founding of Sruti. Details will be presented in a later issue..

Viji Swaminathan

Chairperson

For the Library Committee

UPCOMING SRUTI PROGRAMS IN 2000

Nadaswaram Concert by

Sheik Mahaboob Subhani & Mrs. Kaleeshabi Mahaboob

June 18, 2000 (See attached flyer for details)

Maharajapuram G. Ramachandran — Vocal

(September 23)

M.S. Gopalakrishnan & Narmada – Violin Duo

(October 21)

Priya Sisters – Vocal

(November 11)

From the President's Desk

Dear Friends,

SRUTI celebrated **Thyagaraja Aradhana** with fanfare on April 1, 2000. The day began with Uthsava-sampradhaya Krithis rendered by children, followed by the traditional singing of Pancharathna Kirthanas. The event was well attended by adults and children who gave individual performances as well as other music lovers. People who came, used this opportunity accomplish their favorite goals for the day: pay homage to Saint Thyagaraja, listen to some good music by accomplished people from the community and the budding child artists, and of course, partake of some good food. A festive mood, characteristic of the spirit of the day, prevailed throughout.

Sudarsan Padmanabhan, a disciple of Madurai T.N. Seshagopalan rendered a concert, **Sandhya Srinath**, a disciple of Lalgudi Jayaraman, T. N. Krishnan, and the late V. Janakiraman, and **Sampath Venkatvaradan**, a disciple of Kumbakonam Rajappa Iyer, ably accompanied Sudarshan.

18 adults and 40 children gave individual performances featuring vocal music, veena, saxophone, and mridangam.

This year we introduced a few innovations. We had a musical quiz designed to challenge the musical knowledge of the audience through questions both written and musical. Two teams enthusiastically challenged each other with a group of interested onlookers, who will no doubt sign up for this event next year. We also had a coloring contest for children. This provided them with a welcome diversion from the musical festivities.

The first two events of the season, the music recital by **T. N. Seshagopalan** on April 29 and dance recital by **Alarmel Valli** on May 13 were very successful as judged by strong attendance and favorable comments received from numerous attendees. Please be sure to check SRUTI's homepage at <http://www.sruti.org> for information on upcoming events.

SRUTI intends to bring out a volume of writings on Carnatic Music as a special millenium publication in 2001, to coincide with the 15th anniversary of the founding of SRUTI. The Library Committee is working on it and details will be made available in the near future.

On behalf of the SRUTI Board of Directors,
P. Narayanan
President



Reviews

Sudharhan Padmanabhan in Thyagaraja Aradhana

Vasanth Narayanan

Sudharhan Padmanabhan was the featured singer in this year's Thyagaraja Aradhana. Sudharshan is a disciple of T. N. Seshagopalan and is a Doctoral student in Philosophy in the University of South Florida. On the violin was Sandhya Srinath who is well known to the Sruti Community, having accompanied, among other artists, Chithraveena Ravikiran in Sruti's concert last year. Sampath Venkataravaradan ("Venkat") who has accompanied many of today's foremost Carnatic musicians was on the Mridangam. Their friend Ravindran enthusiastically added Kanjira to the ensemble.

Sudharshan began the concert with the varnam *Neranammithi* in raga *Kanada* set to *Adi thala*. This was quickly followed by a krithi on Lord Ganesha, *Giriraja Sutha* in raga *Bangala*. He then proceeded to the Thyagaraja composition *Gurulekha* in raga *Gowrimanohari* set to *Kanda Chapu thala*. He showed flashes of inspiration in exploring the raga and at times resembled his guru. Having paid tribute to Saint Thyagaraja, Sudharshan invited the audience to reflect on other musical greats as well. We heard a short rendition of Shyama Sastry's *Brovavamma* in *Manji* raga and an elaborate rendition of Papanasa Sivam's *Venkata Ramana* in raga *Lathangi*. He returned to Thyagaraja's works with *Bhale balendu* in *Reetigowla*, *Telisirama* in *Poornachandrika* and *Dasarathe* in *Thodi*. Despite occasional difficulties with his vocal chords, Sudharshan maintained his tempo and concluded the concert with *Enna thavam*, *Hari bolo* and *Iyal isai*.

The musical quartet that occupied the stage that day appeared to represent something unique: almost as if the torch was now being carried by a new generation of artists. They are sure to add vitality to Carnatic music within our shores in the years ahead. The youthful concert was fitting on a day when we rejoiced at the musical development of our own children.



Thyagaraja Aradhana—Children's Participation

Poonima Narayan

I attended Sruti's Thyagaraja Aradhana on 4/1/2000. Individual participation by children commenced after the group presentation of Pancharathna kritis. I enjoyed this segment of the program very much. I have been attending the Aradhana for quite some time. Every year I have noticed that the quality of singing and presentation have improved over the previous year. This year was no exception. There were many participants. It was heartening to see each child perform with a lot of enthusiasm. These students of classical music showed a genuine interest in presenting their piece. A few of the participants presented kritis like seasoned performers. It was a treat to watch the younger children go up on stage in colorful outfits and perform without a hint of nervousness. I congratulate the parents and teachers for encouraging the children and working with them. I eagerly watch the young performers and listen to their presentation to get some idea of where our classical music could be in the next few years. They give us hope that they will nurture and preserve the tradition of classical music in the years to come. I very much look forward to attending next year's program.



Seshagopalan concert

Rasikan

Madurai T.N. Seshagopalan (TNS as he is known) is one of the most popular South Indian musicians of the present day. Endowed with a rich voice and enormous talent he has been regaling enthusiastic audiences for nearly three decades. He is, as it were, the bridge between the old guards of the so-called golden age of Carnatic music, the years 1930-70, to the growing fresh crop of younger musicians. TNS is a master of *kalpana* (innovative) music. If the present day musicians seem to indulge in a lot of *kanakku* (mathematical combinations) in their swara prastarams, the reason could be traced to TNS.

SRUTI audience had a taste of the genius of TNS music on 29 April at his concert in Cabrini College. He was accompanied by Jayasankar Balan of Detroit on the violin and R. Vaidyanathan from India on the mridangam.

TNS was in good form. His Todi that day was superb in which he rendered *Sri Krishnam bhaja manasa*, a masterpiece of Dikshitar. One of the many contributions of Thyagaraja to Carnatic music is the innovation of *sangatis* in a kriti whereby musical variations of increasing complexity are added to specific lines. Not many other composers have been successful with incorporating elaborate *sangatis* in their compositions. Indeed, among Dikshitar's kritis only two are well known for *sangatis*, one of which is *Sri Krishnam* and the other is *Sri Subramanyaya namaste* in Kambhodi. [The *sangatis* in *Vatapi* (Hamsadwani) were supposed to have been introduced by Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer.]

Earlier, TNS exhibited his virtuosity by elaborating *alapana* and *swaraprastarams* in comparatively minor ragas: Jaganmohini (*sobillu saptaswara* of Thyagaraja) and Kalyana Vasantham (*Enda mugam* of Ambujam Krishna). In fact in the Kalyana Vasantham *alapana* he indulged in *thara sthaya sancharams* hitting the *tara sthaya daivatham* and even touching the *nishadam*. For a change, the *prati madhyamam* ragam was Hamir Kalyani and not of the too frequently heard *Pantuvarali/Poorvi kalyani*. TNS's *alapana* in this ragam had tinges of Hindustani music from which the ragam is derived. TNS rendered the lyrical composition *Venkata chaila vihara* of Subbaraya Sastri without *neraval* or *swara prastaram*. Before the lengthy Todi, he sang *Ranganayakam*, a Dikshitar kriti in *Nayaki* emphasizing the subtle *nishada prayogams* of the ragam.

To many people's disappointment TNS did not render an RTP. Indeed Todi was the only major piece. Perhaps the large number of 'chits' that he received curbed his enthusiasm. Or may be the fact that the accompaniments were not upto his standard. Indeed neither Jayasankar nor Vaidyanathan rose to the occasion. I have heard Jayasankar accompany R. Sundar of Detroit. He is an adequate violinist, but that is not enough qualification to accompany a musician of the caliber of TNS. One of TNS's strengths is his mastery over *layam* and the *swaraprastarams* full of *kanakku*. To do full justice to this aspect of his music the mridangam player has to give very good support, which was lacking in Vaidyanathan. In fact even his *tani avarthanam* after the Todi piece was quite pedestrian.

The short pieces (*thukkadas*) after the Todi that TNS sang included the ever popular *Jagadodharana*. TNS suggested that this piece sung in *Kapi*, was originally used to be sung in *Neelambari* in which ragam the *bhavam* of the song would come out better and demonstrated it briefly.

Another interesting piece was a *tillana* composed by TNS himself in *Niroshta*. This ragam, a creation of *Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavathar*, omits the *madhyamam* and *panchamam* in both the *arohanam* and *avarohanam* (*sa, ri, ga, dha, ni; sa, ni, dha, ga, ri*). If you voice the *saptaswaras*, only for *ma* and *pa* you have to bring the lips together. *Muthiah Bhagavathar* has composed a kriti in this ragam (*Raja raja raja*) in which for no word or syllable do you have to touch the lips together. TNS has also composed the *tillana* in similar fashion.

The large number of the *tukkadas* tended to drag the concert towards the end. TNS was obviously trying to please too many of his aficionados.

I have previously voiced my objections to sending *chits*. For sometime I thought the scourge had diminished if not eliminated. The ugly habit seems to have risen its head again. I do wish those interested in hearing particular pieces from a musician would contact the organizers ahead and have their wishes conveyed to the artists who can then plan the concert to possibly include them.



SRUTI Concert Recordings

The Library Committee maintains and distributes tapes of *SRUTI* concert recordings to *SRUTI* members and other music lovers. For a list of available tapes and to order, please contact Viji Swaminathan at (215) 643-2145 or e-mail your request to viji_swaminathan@hotmail.com

The opinions expressed by the contributors of articles and reviews are published in a spirit of openness of communication and freedom of expression. They do not necessarily reflect the views of SRUTI's Board or its members.

Some Musical Forms

Pada or Padam

The word "Pada" or "Padam" was once used to describe any devotional song. According to some writers, the *sringara sankeertana*-s of Annamacharya and his descendants as well as the *devaranama*-s of Purandaradasa were termed as padas. Padas or Padams are scholarly compositions having three sections: Pallavi, Anupallavi and Charanam. They are usually sung in a slower tempo. Padams with an erotic content are said to have been introduced by the compositions of Kshetragna and Sarangapani. Muthu Tandavar of Seerkazhi, a contemporary of Kshetragna, is another well-known composer of padas.

In recent years, *Padam* is used to describe a musical form belonging to dance repertoire. A main concept in the Padam sahithyam is that of the 'lover and beloved', and themes dealt with in Padams include - yearning in love, hopes, frustrations and disappointments, anger, jealousy, etc. The themes thus make the padams highly suitable for use by a dancer who can emote the feelings through abhinaya and body language. Because of their excellent musical quality, Padams are often sung in concerts, usually in the post-pallavi section.

Javali

The *javalis* are believed to have their origin in Karnataka (Javali is derived from the Kannada word "Javadi" meaning lewd poetry). They came into existence in the nineteenth century and are quite popular because of their light, catchy and appealing tunes. The Javali is a much lighter form of music than a padam. The themes revolve around human relationships and are often very sensuous and erotic in nature. They are also often refreshingly humorous, cantankerous or sad. Composed in colloquial language, they are short.

The bulk of the Javali genre of songs are composed in Telugu. Notable composers who have contributed to this musical form include the Tanjavur brothers quartet-- Chinniah, Ponniah, Sivanandam and Vadivelu, and Patnam Subrahmaniam Iyer.

Kavadichindu

These are devotional folk songs composed chiefly by Annamalai Reddiar

in honour of Lord Muruga in the 19th century. Traditionally, the songs are sung when a pilgrimage is undertaken to Lord Muruga's shrine while carrying the *Kavadi* (a semi circular wooden structure laden with offerings for the Lord). The language of the Chindu songs is simple but beautiful. Though folkish in tune and text, Kavadi Chindu-s are sometimes sung towards the close of concerts of classical music.

Rāg Māla and Rāg Māla Paintings of India

Mian Tansen, a great authority on music at the court of Akbar, wrote "Rag Mala", a beautiful book on the various ragas current at his times, based on the *Rag - Ragini* system (the system is described below). Emperor Akbar, a great connoisseur of music, was fascinated by the writings, and ordered the creation of paintings depicting the ragas, under the guidance of Tansen himself. The history, characteristics and emotional aspects of each raga and raginee are superbly portrayed in these paintings. Seasons and seasonal ragas of the six Rithus, and the elements of *shringara* or love are depicted in great detail. These original Moghal Rag Mala Miniature Paintings have been preserved for posterity. Later, other rulers patronized the art and paintings were also created on *Kavipriya* and *Rasikapriya* of poet Keshavadas. Jayadeva's *Geetha Govinda* and the *Srimad Bhagavatam* also provided lots of themes, especially in the Kangra Valley of Himachal Pradesh.

Thus Rāg Māla and related paintings belong to different schools spread over all of North India and Northern Karnataka, as well as some parts of Telangana in Andhra Pradesh. The chief schools of Raga Miniature Paintings are Mewar, Bundi, Alwar, Jaisalmar, Bikaner, Kishangarh, Marwar and Jodhpur in Rajasthan. The Deccani paintings hail from Berur, Bijapur, golconda, Bidar and Ahmadnagar, while the *Paharhi* schools are from the Kangra Valley and Chamba Valley of Himachal Pradesh and Garhwal areas of Uttar Pradesh. Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy of Sri Lanka, was greatly responsible for bringing the message of these paintings to the cultured world. These paintings now adorn famous museums of London, Berlin, Paris, Calcutta, Bombay, Hyderabad, Bikaner and many other centers.

The Raag-Raagini System of Music in Northern India

According to a legend, five ragas emanated from the voices of Shiva as Panchmukha Mahadeva (the five-faced form) and one from Parvathi. These six ragas were Shree, Bhairava, Deepaka, Hindola, Megha and Maala Kausha (later Malkauns). According to the Rag-Raginee system, each of these ragas had six wives called raginees, each raginee had 6 sons, each son had a Bharya (wife), Daasa (servant) and Daasi (maid). Each raga was associated with one of the six Rithus or seasons, Vasantah, Greeshma, Varshaa, Sharath, Hemantha, and shishira. This system was only an artistic grouping without any scientific basis, and soon fell out of favor.

Professor Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande of Maharashtra, reclassified the ragas of Hindusthani music spread over vast areas under different gharanas or schools of music. He collected enormous data and devised the Thaata system towards the end of the 19th century. He gave a broad base and classified most of the existing ragas of his time in Hindusthani music, under 10 scales or thaatas (Melas). Six of these are the primordial ones that prevailed in India and are Bhairavi, Asaaveri, Kaapi, Khamaaj, Bilaaval and Yaman Kalyan. To these he added four others which accommodated the bulk of the ragas, not suited for the first six - namely Bhairav, Thodee, Poorvee and Maarwaa.

The ten thaatas and their Carnatic equivalents are Bhiaravi- Hanumathodi, Bhairav - Mayamalavagaula, Asaaveri-Nathabhairavi, Kafee- Kharaharapriya, Khamaaj- Harikambodhi, Bilaval-Dheerashankarabharana, Thodi-Shubhapanthuvrali, Poorvee-Kamavardhini, Maarva-Gamanashrama, and Kalyan-Mechakalyani.

Now, due to the introduction of many *Avivadi* melas of South like Charukeshi, Vachaspathi, Simhendramadhyama and keeravani, 32 thaats have become necessary.

Ref: *Sangeetha Lalithya Lahari* - By S. Mukund.

Compiled by LC Staff



Community News

New Arrival

Congratulations to **Raji** and **Dinakar Subramanian** on the arrival of their new baby daughter. **Mallika Dinakar** was born on April 12 at the Bryn Mawr Hospital, weighing 7 lbs, 14 oz. Dinakar is a former President of Sruti and currently a member of the Resource Committee.

Award

Santosh Adipudi Vardhana, currently a Freshman at Upenn and a Benjamin Franklin Trustee Scholar, has been chosen as the Music Director of their premier Accapella group- Chord on Blues. He is majoring in Biology of Human Behavior. Santosh is the son of Rajalakshmi and Vinayavardhana Adipudi, life members of Sruti. Our congratulations and best wishes to Santosh.

Obituary

Our heartfelt sympathies and condolences to **Dr. Ramesh Adiraju** and his family on the recent demise of his parents. His mother, Mrs. **Rajeshwari Krishnamurthy**, died on May 8 after a brief illness, in Hyderabad. Dr. Adiraju's father Mr. **A.V.R. Krishnamurthy**, died on February 15 at the age of 75. He held many important positions in his career, and retired as the Officer on Special Duty to the former prime minister Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao. Mr. Krishnamurthy was very actively involved in social services.

In Other News

Padma Awards

The annual 'Padma' award ceremony in which celebrities from all walks of life are honored by the President of India took place on March 30, 2000. The list of honorees included many from the world of music and dance.

Among those awarded the **Padma Vibhushan** were the renowned musicians **Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia** and **Pandit Jasraj Motiram** (earlier recipient of *Padma Bhushan* and *Padma Shri*), and the Odissi exponent **Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra** (earlier recipient of *Padma Bhushan*).

Padma Bhushan was awarded to the Kuchipudi couple **Raja and Radha Reddy**.

Shubha Mudgal, the Hindusthani Vocalist, received the **Padma Shri**.

Of interest to our community is another honoree, **H.Y. Sharada Prasad** (brother of Dr. H.Y. Rajagopal, a life member of Sruti and a former board member) who received the *Padma Bhushan* award. Besides being the Director of Information to three Prime Ministers (most notably to Mrs. Gandhi), Mr. Sharada Prasad was Vice-Chairman of the ICCR (Indian Council for Cultural Relations) and in charge of sponsoring artists to various international festivals, etc. and of recommending candidates for various awards. He is a connoisseur of Carnatic and Hindusthani music and various other arts.



Some Recent Publications on Carnatic Music

Bhava Raga Tala Modini By Dr. V.V. Srivatsa, Publisher - Guruguhanjali
— A collection of articles on Dikshitar and his compositions.

Purandaradasar Kirtanai - 1 By V. N. Padmini and Jayalakshmi Srinivasan
— Compilation of selected compositions of Purandaradasa — swara and sahithya in Kannada, Tamil and Sanskrit, with meanings in English.

When God is a customer — Edited and translated by A K Ramanujam and Velcheru Narayana Rao and published by Oxford University Press.
— Mainly a translation of Padams of Annamacharya, Kshetragna and Sarangapani.

Discussion Forum

The method of teaching the classical arts like music and dance in India has undergone many changes over the centuries. The practice of *Gurukuluwasam* is part of history. Also, gone are the days when a music teacher would visit the home of the pupil five days a week to teach, for a nominal fee. With increased demand on the time and purse, education in the classical arts is no longer within easy reach for many households.

In the United States, interest in these arts has risen phenomenally in recent years and an increasing number of children (and adults) are getting educated in these arts. However, for parents, teachers, and youngsters born and brought up in this country, there are unique challenges to reckon with. These include lack of exposure of children to Indian languages and the traditional culture which might provide them with better understanding of the arts, demand on their time (when they are juggling numerous activities along with school work), demand on parents' time and purse, unavailability of teachers, etc.

These very real challenges give rise to some important questions: Should there be significant changes in the traditional methods of teaching these arts to the young population U.S.? What are the responsibilities of teachers and parents to make sure that the youngsters do not lose interest in learning the arts? What can we learn and adopt from the methods used by teachers of Western Classical Music and dance? What role should cultural organizations like Sruti play in educating them?

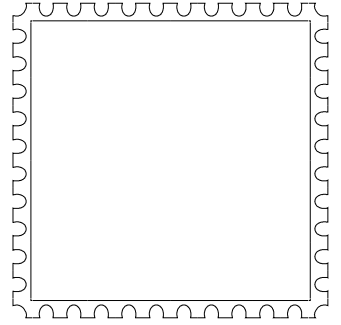
We invite your thoughts and opinions on these questions. We are interested in hearing from students, teachers and parents on the subject. Please email your input to sruti@sruti.org or viji_Swaminathan@hotmail.com, for publication in the next issue of Sruti Notes.





SRUTI

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