



SRUTI NOTES

SRUTI

The India Music & Dance Society

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FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Friends:

Sruti has presented many exciting programs since the last newsletter. In this issue, we include a review of the Nrityagram performance by Sanjay Doddamani (along with comments sent by others), comments on the recent Sruti co-sponsored dance workshop (conducted by the Visweswarans, co-sponsored by Sruti) by Ramaa Ramesh, a review by Shubha Bhat, of another unique dance performance in Delaware by the students of Shree Ramana Maharishi Academy for the Blind, and an interview from an earlier concert of Ranjani and Gayathri by Janani Prabhakar. The current issue also includes letters from our readers, a *Fact or Fiction* article by yours truly and some happy announcements of awards and graduations sent in by our members. As always, we thank all the contributors and welcome comments and suggestions from our readers.

The Library Committee is working on the annual issue of Sruti Ranjani to be published in November. We welcome contributions of articles related to classical dance and music for the issue. The deadline for submission is October 1. Please contact a member of the Library Committee if you are planning to contribute an article.

We also welcome advertisements from those of you who own businesses, to cover the cost of publication. Please contact a Library Committee member for rates. Your support will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you.

T. Sarada

For the Library Committee



Upcoming Events

Carnatic Saxophone Concert

Kadri Gopalnath

(Sept 27, 2003, See attached flyer for details)

Lecture/Demonstrations on Sangeetha & Laya

Geetha Bennett & Trichy Sankaran

(Saturday Oct 11, 2003, St. Mary's Hall, Villanova University)

Hindusthani Sarod Concert

Usthad Ali Akbar Khan

(Nov 1, 2003, Zellerbach Theater, Annenberg Center for The Performing Arts)

Carnatic Vocal Concert

O.S. Thiagarajan

(November 15, 2003, St. Mary's Hall, Villanova University)

Composers' Day, General Body Meeting, Elections

(Details to be announced shortly)

From the President's Desk

Dear Friends

The past few months were quite eventful with a variety of performances by Raja and Radha Reddy, Ganesh and Kumaresh and the Nrityagram Ensemble. The presentation *Sri, In Search of The Goddess* by the Nrityagram Ensemble at the Annenberg Center for The Performing Arts was indeed everything that we expected it to be and more. The event attracted a sizable audience and considerable media attention, with previews and reviews in major newspapers. Besides being an excellent presentation including modern and traditional Odissi pieces, the event turned out to be quite educational to more than 450 Indian and non-Indian audiences who attended the performance. In addition to segments of dance including modern and traditional Odissi pieces, the event included a very interesting question and answer session wherein the highly articulate leader of the troupe, Surupa Sen, answered questions from the curious audience about Nrityagram and *Sri* choreography.

We are now looking forward to presenting you an exciting Fall season of events including concerts by Kadri Gopalnath, Ali Akbar Khan and O.S. Thiagarajan, and lecture/demonstrations by Geetha Bennett and Trichy Sankaran. Please mark the dates on your calendar and look for details on our website and in our future mailings.

In the long range interests of Sruti, we have been working on establishing a permanent home for Sruti and a strategic plan for achieving this goal. We have also planned to set up a library related to Indian Classical Arts. The library will house, in addition to Sruti's archives, concert recordings, literature on the classical arts and audio and video recordings of well-known artists. It is our fervent wish that in the near future, the library will be able to serve as an important resource for education and research in Indian classical arts. This will also go a long way in meeting Sruti's goals of promoting the Indian Classical arts in the area. Donations are being accepted for the Library Fund. Donations of books and recordings are also being accepted. Please call a member of the Board if you have any questions.

Support from our members is very important for the growth of Sruti. Please attend the excellent programs that we offer and encourage your friends and relatives to become members. We are very happy that the response to patron membership (introduced late last year) has been good and we request all our Life members to consider joining the pool of patrons.

We have received many appreciative comments about Sruti's new website, designed by V.V. Raman, a member of the Library Committee. If you have not visited the site recently, please do so. Your comments and suggestions are most welcome. We also invite the connoisseurs among you to participate in having interesting and meaningful discussions on the web on topics related to music and dance.

We look forward to seeing you all at the next performance. Please spread the word and support the organization.

Sincerely,
Viji Swaminathan, President
For the Board of Directors

Review: Sri – In Search of the Goddess

Sanjay Doddamani

The world as a global village holds true after witnessing SRUTI, the Indian Music and Dance Society host a premier Indian dance troupe, Nrityagram on July 12 2003 at the Zellerbach Theater, Annenberg Center for Performing Arts. Nrityagram is the only dance village of its kind where a confluence of performing arts has found expression in a truly ideal setting for the propagation of classical dance.

A stark but powerful opening scene set the stage for a contemporary exploration of an age old search for the divine female principle; Sri – In Search of the Goddess. Reaching the depths of feminine energy to ultimately discover the goddess within, the bold, unhindered lines empowered the dancers' soft and curvaceous Eastern Indian dance form of Odissi to tackle esoteric concepts. Inspired by Aurobindo's epic poem Savitri, the dancers vividly used imagery to portray the darkness of night, the brightness of fire and the silence of death. What is considered a difficult theme came through with ease and élan, bringing out audible reactions by a diverse multi-ethnic audience who were awe-struck by the spell-binding imagery. Movements were synchronized with exceptional accuracy and the footwork added powerful rhythmic time cycles.

A brief intermission changed the pace to a familiar and much adored Odissi repertoire. Donning traditional costumes with the crowning *Shikara* head ornament, the dancers gave displays of Hindu iconography amidst a background of lilting, professionally mastered music. The well-known Aarabhi Ragam Pallavi bears the rubberstamp of Master Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra. Credit for the flawless rendering and choreography goes to Nrityagram's artistic director, Surupa Sen. Bijayini Satpati, the seniormost of the five-member troupe performed an Ashtapadi from the famed Geeta Govinda epic poem, highlighting Krishna's exploits in fabled Brindavan. Ayona Bhaduri, Priyambada Pattanaik and Pavithra Reddy were the other members of this superb troupe. With powerful imagery they concluded with a dance in praise of the mother goddess, a fitting finale to the performance that had the audience in silent rapture. The thundering applause that followed was the response from the audience to the magical performance. A short question and answer session opened the floor to discussions about the dance village and cross-cultural influences.

The realization of a burning dream by founding guru and celebrity Protima Gauri Bedi to consecrate a sanctuary for teaching Indian classical dances, Nrityagram has become a veritable reality. They have won tremendous acclaim and danced all over the world. The Nrityagram performance was an impressive product of cultural globalization, opening minds and winning hearts through a contemporary infusion into an ancient heritage.

[**Sanjay Doddamani**, a cardiologist, is also a Bharathanatyam dancer and lives in Philadelphia]

Continued on page 3

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.

Other comments about the Nrityagram performance

Congratulations on a fantastic program! The Nrityagram Dance Ensemble was truly outstanding. I enjoyed the work very much. The first half was very interesting as it was a very interesting fusion of traditional and contemporary dance. The second half was very compelling as well. The form of odissi is such a beautiful and fluid form and these artists are exquisite practioners. Thank you for your invitation and for bringing them to Philadelphia.

Nick Stuccio

Producing Director, Philadelphia Fringe Festival

On Saturday July 12,2003 five members in my family saw the dance performance staged by Nrityagram artists at the Annenberg Center. We witnessed a unique and an extraordinary performance. The first first half was very bold and artistic. All the artists were just perfect in their presentation. What appeared to be somewhat confusing in the beginning became very clear as the performance continued - they were just perfect artists trying to present a theme which has stood the test of time. The more conventional pieces in the second half were presented at a very high level of artistic caliber, which we enjoyed immensely. The Q and A period was just PERFECT! Ms.Sen with her team was able to give an account of the Nrityagram and we all came to know the effort and sacrifice it has taken for them to succeed in bringing a classical dance production connecting the past to present and looking to the future!

Congratulations and thanks to you for arranging an event where we all could sit with our American friends and be proud to see an Indian Cultural Show with our chins UP!

-Bharathi and Sumathi Sena

Patron members of Sruti

We were privileged indeed to be able to watch the rare beauty and virtuosity of the Nrityagram Dance Ensemble in Philadelphia last Saturday. Their blend of the captivating contemporary with the powerful traditional fused perfectly to fill the audience with the true spirit of the Goddess.

Thank you, Sruti, for once again offering us the finest in Indian culture.

-Sherry Babbitt

Director of Publishing, Philadelphia Museum of Art

It was a wonderful concert. The post performance talk was outstanding. The dedication and commitment was felt by all. The audience gave the company and outstanding response. It was well deserved. Thank you for the invitation.

-Randy Swartz

Artistic Director, Dance Celebration, Philadelphia

....the ensemble demonstrated the unique beauty of contemporary dance in India. Striking a balance between innovative and traditional movement has been a challenge for many contemporary Indian dancers, however Nrityagram did it with such remarkable elegance and sophistication that Sri Savitri truly embodied the spirit behind contemporary dance.a style and flavor unparalleled in its category

-Urmika Chatterjee

Asst Artistic Director

ArthArts, Washington DC.

From Darkness to Light

Shubha Bhat

In May 2003 I had the privilege of witnessing a group of four talented performers at the Hindu Temple of Delaware, as they danced with grace and confidence, despite their blindness. I remember sitting in awe as the four performers moved across the stage, weaving in and out of several intricate group configurations, all in sync. I remember admiring their perceptive sense of space as they danced the *Deepanjali*, holding lighted candles in their outstretched palms, and revealing their theme, 'from darkness to light'. They were able to dance and maneuver the flickering candles in impressive patterns with the heightened strength of their other senses. The four students performed both Bharatha Natyam and Kuchipudi. Since I have been learning Bharatha Natyam for the past 11 years, I was especially interested in being exposed to Kuchupudi, another ancient form of Indian classical dance. I was amazed at how Manjappa, the eldest of the four dancers, was able to balance the pot of water on his head while dancing on a brass plate. It was thrilling to watch, as Manjappa would match the pattern and increasing speed of the beats danced by his fellow performers. I could only imagine the level of balance and concentration that went into performing such a piece with the precision and talent that they did!

At the end of the performance, I was convinced that I had seen a unique show of strength, determination and talent. I was curious to learn more about the skilled performers and about their artistic director. I learned through their brochure that the four performers, Manjappa (23), Shridhar (16), Hemalatha (18) and Savithri (18) were students of the Shree Ramana Maharishi Academy for the Blind (SRMAB), a voluntary organization in Bangalore, India which encourages people with disabilities to fulfill their potential in all aspects of their lives and focus on ability. I was also curious to know details about their lives as blind students and performers. I called Dr. B.T. Lakshman, the coordinator of the programs and host of the troop, to see if I could speak with the artistic director, Smt. Swaroopalakshmi, an accomplished performer who has been teaching at SRMAB since 1995. When I spoke to her over the phone, she was open to my curious questions. I asked her about the students that attend SRMAB and the various things they learn there. She said that SRMAB is a boarding residency school that is free of cost for students with disabilities from different parts of Karnataka. Currently, SRMAB offers education for 300 students ranging Pre-K to 10th grade. Based on their interests, the students are allotted into groups and taught dance, music or drama. The four students that performed at the Hindu Temple of Delaware have been learning dance at the academy from Smt. Swaroopalakshmi for several years and have performed all over India and abroad.

I also wanted to learn about the process of teaching dance to blind students. She told me that she attends to

(Continued on page 4)

(From Darkness to Light, Continued from page 3)

the needs of each individual and she uses the “touch and feel” method of teaching basic postures and expressive hand gestures (*mudras*). During the two or more years of basic dance training, she also orients them with all the directions, so that it is easier to incorporate the basic movements into a dance piece, and then to choreograph it with a group. I also wondered how the performers were able to sense the dimensions of the stage and adjust to the varying performance spaces. She replied that before each performance, the students orient themselves with the size and shape of the stage. Also, Smt. Swaroopalakshmi said that they put tape on the stage floor so that the performers can sense if they are in the center, or if they are coming too close to the edge. Once again, this is based on the “touch and feel” method. Smt. Swaroopalakshmi said that she enjoys teaching these students. It was nice to hear about her role in the breathtaking performance that I was able to witness.

I appreciate the efforts of everyone who made this possible, especially Dr. B.T. Lakshman for sponsoring and hosting the troop in his house for many weeks. I will never forget how, despite the challenge of being blind, the talented performers exuded light from their vibrant dance and dedicated spirits. Understanding their learning process opened my heart to their experience. I am sure that many others were touched by their performance, ‘*From Darkness to Light*’.

[Shubha Bhat, a 11th grade student at The Baldwin School, West Chester, is a student of the Natya Academy.]

Sacred Knowledge....Devoted Learning

Ramaa Ramesh

“Guru is a teacher who leads the student from ignorance to bliss, wisdom and enlightenment”. This summer had a great impact in the minds of several young dancers who benefited immensely from the Bharatanatyam/music/art workshop conducted by Nardhana Academy of Dance and co sponsored by ‘Srutu’. Padmashri Smt. Chitra Visweswaran and her husband Sri. R.Visweswaran gave their very best as the four week workshop unraveled one week at a time packed with in depth knowledge, traditional approaches to dance and music, cultural values and more importantly an unforgettable bonding. The art/ painting aspect of the workshop taught by Dr. Sheela Viswanath was an icing on the cake, providing the participants with an eager relief from the otherwise rigorous schedule.

‘Guru-Shishya’ Parampara embodies the living and learning relationship between the master and the pupil. This tradition signifies the emotional, intellectual and spiritual surrender of the ardent shishya to the guru. It gave me immense satisfaction that the next generation, living so far away from India, could sample such an experience as they learnt technique and abhinaya from my guru, thus preserving the purity of the style. When we wrapped up the workshop with an informal showing, it reminded us one more time how music and dance are inseparable entities. The unbelievable effort of Sri.Visweswaran who made students (who could not sing ‘Sa Pa Sa’ on the first day of the camp) sing many beautiful songs and the spectacular display of their artwork stole the hearts of the parents and others.

[Ramaa Ramesh is the Director of Nardhana Academy of Dance, Haverford, PA.]

Ranjani and Gayathri An interview by Janani Prabhakar

The day after Ranjani & Gayathri’s concert on April 13, 2003, I had the opportunity to talk with Ranjani (the older of the two sisters) over the telephone. I was not able to write down Ranjani’s responses word for word, but I have tried my best to recapture her comments. She was very nice to talk to and I really enjoyed the opportunity.

JP: Janani Prabhakar, **RB:** Ranjani Balasubhramaniam

JP: How long have you and your sister been learning and from whom did you both learn?

RB: I have been learning vocal music formally since the age of five from my mother Meenakshi Balasubramaniam. I started learning the violin at the age of eight from Sangeetha Bhushanam T.S. Krishnaswamy. My sister, Gayathri, started learning the violin at the age of 6 and also learned vocal. Our Guru would make us learn to sing the song before playing it on the violin. At that time, we were not seriously singing.

JP: When did you two make the transition from violin to vocal?

RB: We have been giving vocal concerts for the last five to six years. Our vocal teacher was Sri P.S. Narayana Swami, disciple of Sri Semmangudi Iyer. He thought that we had good voices and motivated us to give concerts. So, he arranged a concert for us. Gayathri was very skeptical and was not sure if we would sound good. Also, our father had not heard us sing together and did not know whether we would sound good, so he cancelled that concert. But, we competed in competitions and won, so we eventually arranged another concert. Our first concert was in Nanganalur and after that, we started singing mainly.

JP: Do you feel that learning the violin helped your singing and vice versa?

RB: Both ways, playing instrumental helps vocal and learning vocal helps instrumental. Each feed on the other. Each boosts the other.

JP: How do you and your sister practice together?

RB: We have been giving vocal concerts ever since I was 13 and my sister was 10. We practiced both the manodharma and non-manodharma parts together. The non-manodharma parts like krithis and varnams we practiced to develop a set way of singing them. Coordination just happens naturally since we have been singing together for so long. Now, we practice together as far as krithis, but manodharma separately.

JP: When is the best time to practice? Many say that morning is the best time.

RB: Early morning is the best time to practice *aakaaram* and lower octaves. You should not practice the upper octaves because your voice is not broken in yet. By practicing the lower octaves, you will develop a firm foundation and a wide range in the lower octaves. After doing that for an hour, you can move on to varnams. But, about an hour and a half of early morning voice practice is a must.

JP: How many hours do you and your sister practice each day?

RB: It is very flexible. We practice early mornings and throughout the day. There are never a set number of hours.

JP: Is music your main profession?

RB: Yes, it is.

JP: Any advice you would give to young music students, especially those in the United States?

RB: Listen to a lot of concerts, especially the stalwarts of current time and from the Golden years like Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, Ariyakuddi Ramanujam Iyengar, and Maharajapuram Vishwanatha Iyer. Listening is the only way to improve your singing.

[Janani, a Carnatic music student of , recently graduated from High School and will be attending Pittsburgh University]

Rescue of Bhadrachalam Ramadas from Imprisonment

T. Sarada

This story, in the series of fact or fiction is so dramatic that it deserves narration. It is about Sri Bhadrachalam Ramadas (1620-1688) who is a well-known and revered composer in the Karnatic music world. His life history is well documented and recorded by himself in his kirtanas. At the same time, there are also incidences quoted and written about that fall in the realm of myth of outstanding proportions. Judge for yourself from one of them given below.

First a little background on Sri Ramadas. He was christened Gopanna. Details of family history are in his *Dasarati Satakam*. Because of his devotion to the deity Sri Rama of Badrachalam, he has been known as, "Bhadrachalam Ramadas", even during his lifetime. It is interesting to note that Bhadrachalam got its fame due to its association with the composer and devotee Gopanna and not vice versa. His maternal uncles were working in the kingdom of Golconda at that time and hence he was appointed as the Tashildar of Bhadrachalam Taluq. This was during the reign of Abdul Hasan Qutub Shah, also known as the *Tanisha*. (1672-1686.)

Ramadas wrote music in the *kirtana* form, with pallavi, anupallavi and caranam and his songs have many caranas. They are mostly in Telugu and a few in Sanskrit. He did use some typical Tamil expressions once in a while, like *adiyen* (your humble servant) and *thiruvadigals* (your holy feet). His simple language appeals to all classes of people. His songs number about one hundred and are classified under three heads: those written before his incarceration, during his prison life and after release. But his *bhava* was always *bhakti* and nothing else. His *mudra* varied between *Ramadasa*, *Bhadrachalavasa*, *Bhadradri*, *Bhadragiri*, and *Bhadrasyla* etc. ¹

Saint Tyagaraja pays him tribute in five different compositions and in one instance even equates Sri Ramadas with devotees like Narada, Prahlada and Parasara! These references are in the songs, *Kshirasagara sayana* in Devaghandrari, *Brindavana lola* in Todi, *Kaligiunte gada* in Kiravani, *Emi dova balkuna* in Saranga and 7th kanda padya in *Prahlada Bhakti vijayam*. ²

Like Sri Manickavachakar, another great devotee in a high

position in the government of old Tamil Nadu, Ramadas spent the state money in renovating the Bhadrachalam temple which needed much work to be done. Just as in the other case, when no public donations were forthcoming to pay back the State, Ramadas was imprisoned for misappropriation of state funds. He spent twelve years in jail. He used his time sculpting and drawing divine themes on the walls of his cell. These are still there. He also wrote many songs during this period. All these are facts with documented evidence.

Now comes one of the hard to believe incidences.^{1,2} His release was considered to be due to heavenly interference. The story goes that at the end of twelve years, two majestic and young men commanding respect, (Rama and Lakshmana) appeared before Tanisha, paid him six lakhs of rupees, (Rs. 600,000, the amount owed by Ramadas to the State), had Ramadas released and disappeared. There is even now a gate on the Golconda hill, which is called Ramji-Lakshmanji gate. This is about a hundred yards from the prison cell and at a short distance from the palace of Tanisha on the hill.

Once the Tanisha realized what had happened, he realized the greatness of Sri Ramadas, apologized to him and reappointed him as the Tashildar. Not only that, he endowed the temple with the Jagirs (revenues) of Bhadrachalam, Palvancha and Samkaragiripatti and gave additional moneys to the temple. The gold coins believed to have been given by Ramji are still held very sacred and are referred to as Ram Tanka coins (Ramrajya coins). These coins have, on one side, a depiction of Sri Rama Paattabhisheka and on the other, Sri Anjaneya. ²

References

1. *Vaggeyakaraka Charitram*. History of Iyalisai Pulavars. 4th edition. Vainika Vidwan A. Sundharam Iyer. Music Books Publishers. Chennai. 1977.
2. *Great Composers Book I*. P. Sambhamoorthy. 3rd edition, 1978. The Indian Music Publishing House. Chennai.

[T. Sarada is a member of the Library Committee]

Letters ...

The following letters received in March, 2003, were inadvertently left out of the Spring Newsletter. We apologize for the omission.—Editors.

Dear Editor,

At the recent Thyagarja aradhana (3/1/03), SRUTI President, Viji Swaminathan proposed an interesting logic in moving the rendering of Utsava sampradaya keertanais to 10:00 a.m., namely provide (sizable) audience to the musicians. Since rendering the (gana raga) Pancharatna kritis and the concert of the artist of the day are the main items of the celebration, using the above logic, perhaps they could be arranged just before and immediately after lunch when we have the maximum audience.

Somehow, all these years, I had naively believed that the primary purpose of the Aradhana was to pay homage to the great composer and people would perform, audience or no audience. Sincerely,

Mani

East Norriton, PA.

(Continued on page 6)

Dear Editor,

Re: Sruti Notes Vol 6, Issue 1, 2003, *Sruti Ranjani*, 2002

That G.N.B. got his B.A. (Honours) degree as a student of Madras Christian College is a well established fact. When I was a student in that college several years later, we were attempting to get him to give a concert at the College. When we mentioned this to Professor McPhail of the English Department, he, with his usual cold civility, said "Yes, he was *not* a good (Literature) Honours student; he got a Second class."

Also, I have a recording of a 'National Program' of G.N.B. The introductory announcement in English says that he was an Honours graduate in English Literature. Announcements by All India Radio are usually very accurate. The biography of G.N.B. published by his son also confirms this.

S. Sankaran, Blue Bell, PA

Sarod Concert by Ali Akbar Khan

Brochures from Penn Presents containing information about the concert will be sent shortly by the Annenberg Center to people on our mailing list. The information will also be on the Sruti website shortly. Please call a member of the Board if you need more information. Book your tickets early to avoid disappointment.

Community News

Dr. Lalitha Krishnan of Havertown, PA, was awarded the Community Service Award-2003 by the Council of Indian Organizations at the India Day Celebrations at Penns Landing in August, in recognition of her services to the community. A life member of Sruti, Dr. Lalitha Krishnan has been an active volunteer for many organizations and has served on the committees of Sruti and SEWAA. Our congratulations and best wishes to her.

Graduations: Our congratulations and best wishes to...

Soumya Menon, daughter of Dr. Kala Menon, Graduated from Harrington Highschool in Lower Merion as a distinguished scholar. She will attend Villanova University this Fall on a full merit scholarship. She was a Captain of Varsity Speech and Debate team since her sophomore year and has won several awards in public speaking at regional, state and national level competitions. Soumya is also a student of the Natya Academy and had her Bharathanatyam arangetram last June.

Viraj Narayanan, son of Vasantha and Narayanan (former president of Sruti), graduated from Radnor High School. In Radnor, Viraj was active in Cross Country and Varsity Tennis. He sang with the *Meistersingers* and *Pro Musica*. He played first violin in the Radnor High School Orchestra. He is also interested in Carnatic music and is a violin student of T.N. Bala. Viraj will be attending Carnegie Mellon University starting in September '03.

Janani Prabhakar, daughter of Kalyani and Kris Prabhakar (our vice-president) graduated from Upper Dublin Highschool, PA. She will be pursuing her studies as a Neuroscience major in the Honors College at the University of Pittsburgh. She is the recipient of the Dr. William R.M. Ritter Science Award

and Scholarship, the Outstanding Botany Project Award/Scholarship, Who's Who Among American HighSchool Students Award, and a three-time recipient of the Creative Communications Poetry Award. She sings Carnatic Music and recently performed in Madras, India, with her sister Ranjani.

Chethan Ramamurthy, son of Smt. Hema and Dr. Hullur Ramamurthy of Morrisville, PA, graduated from The Hun School of Princeton as Salutatorian of his class and will be attending Dartmouth College in September, 2003. He was nominated to the Academic All-Stars Team in the Princeton area, was inducted into the Cum Laude Society, and was a finalist in both the National Merit Scholarship Competition and the National Chemistry Olympiad. Chethan received Carnatic vocal training from T.N. Bala until the age of 12, and has been learning tabla and western drums for several years. He served on the Youth Committees of SRUTI and Triveni.

Srikant Rao, son of Gayathri and Sudhakar Rao (former president of Sruti), graduated from Wissahickon High School. He was a Valedictorian, President of the National Honor Society and Senior Class President of his graduating class. Srikant will be attending the University of Pennsylvania this fall to study under the Jerome Fisher Program in Management and Technology. He will be pursuing a degree in business from Wharton and a degree in bioengineering from the School of Engineering. Srikant was also a part of his school's Varsity tennis team and a cappella singing groups. He has also pursued his interest in music as a student of Carnatic music under Sri T.N.Bala.

Mahesh Swaminathan, son of Viji and P. Swaminathan of Ambler, PA, graduated from Jefferson University Medical School with an MD degree. He started the residency program in Internal Medicine in July at Mount Sinai Hospital in Manhattan, New York.

Welcome New Members

SRUTI is happy to welcome **Ms. Meena Pennathur** as a patron member. Our hearty welcome to **Sampath Kannan** and his family of Philadelphia, PA as a new Life member.

Events in the Area

The Philadelphia Fringe Festival runs August 29 - September 13. Akram Khan, master of Kathak and contemporary dance, presents *Kaash* (if), his first full-length work, the culmination of his two years as the Choreographer-in-Residence at the Royal Festival Hall in London. For the set and music, he collaborated with the famed Turner Prize-winning sculptor Anish Kapoor and the Mercury Prize-winning composer Nitin Sawhney. A company of five, including Khan, performs the work on Wed 9/10 8:00pm and Fri 9/12 8pm. For details, visit <http://www.pafringe.org/>.

Sangeet Rajani Music Competition

The 2003 Sangeet Rajani music competition will be held on Saturday October 18, 2003. Children under the age of 20 are welcome to participate. There will be separate categories for both Karnatak and Hindustani music. All entries must be received by Sept 25th, 2003. For more information please call Vivek Khadilkar (215-357-5383), Sangeeta Akolkar (215-855-1422), or Hema Ramamurthy (215-295-1980).