



## SRI PARTHASARATHY SWAMI SABHA

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# SANGEETHA SARATHY



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## MAGIC WITH BAMBOO

**R BHARATHWAJ**

Each vidwan has an individual perspective to music. How they approach and present is interdependent to this perspective. More than vocal musicians, Instrumental musicians have additional ways of looking into their music and presentation.

On a warm evening, Dr Vijayagopal chose to present known compositions that are rarely performed. Starting with a brief alapanai of Nattai, he presented the Veenai Kuppaiyer's ghana ragamalika varnam 'Intha kopamelara.' Thyagaraja's 'Raghunayaka' in Hamsadhvani came next, with a brief sketch and some interesting swara exchanges between Vijayagopal and Parur Ananthakrishnan on the violin.

Saveri was the first ragam taken for detailed treatment. It was a traditional affair by the entire team with the raga essays on the flute and the violin, both good and enjoyable. 'Muruga muruga,' a composition of Periyaswamy Thooran was presented in a leisurely pace. The swara exchange with a koraippu was in tune with the mood of the composition. A GNB composed Nalinakanti kriti, 'Nee paadame gati' was next. With veteran KV Prasad on the mridangam, who showed



how each piece could be accompanied, it was delightful. He was well assisted by G Guruprasanna on the kanjira.

Vijayagopal took up Nasikabhushani as the main ragam for the evening. His alapanai was elaborate and developed in a very methodical fashion. Phrases rolled out fast and slow with many patterns. Ananthakrishnan was equally good in his response. Vijayagopal used a bass flute for the initial part of the well-rendered tanam and changed back to the usual-length flute for the upper notes. Ananthakrishnan aptly showcased the cut-bow technique for tanam that the Parur school is known for. A simple pallavi, without any sahitya, but based only on mathematical patterns, set to Adi talam was presented. Vijayagopal said that one could fit any sahitya to

this tune. He presented extensive neraval and played multiple speeds and nadai. With the pallavi being math-based and without lyrics, Vijayagopal had the freedom to manoeuvre many patterns. Ananthakrishnan provided fitting responses. The swara section had multiple ragams, which were alternated even during the koraippu swarams. KV Prasad and Guruprasanna played with much anticipation and went on to play an elaborate tani avarthanam.

The concert ended with 'Muralidhara gopala' in Maand and 'Nirai Madi mukham,' Tiruppugazh in Hamsanandi, in quick succession. With an amazing continuity, Vijayagopal presented a very melodious and soothing concert. His team of artists were good in joining this magic.

## சங்கதிகளிடம் சரணாகதி - N J நந்தினி மற்றும் ரமணா பாலசந்திரன்

Now singing, now explaining, alternating between these two acts with remarkable alacrity and adaptation, organizing themselves with lightning speed (re-organizing too to start on a new subject) maintaining continuity, all these sterling qualities distinguished these two, N J Nandini, a singer of repute, with admirable credentials on the academic front and Ramana Balachandran, a prodigy on the veena, who was awarded directly the A grade by AIR. They together presented their observations as wisdom on 'Sangati: Embellishing the swaras in Raga and Lyric.'



First and foremost they made a sane observation that Tyagaraja kritis abound in sangatis. But the same can't be applied in a similar scale to Muthuswami Dikshithar's or Syama Sastri's compositions. There are exceptions to this rule and one may pick up a kriti like 'Vatapi' (Dikshithar) and 'Palinchu Kamakshi' (Syama Sastri.) However beautiful (easily learnable even by children too) they are, N J Nandini wondered if Dikshithar himself would have formed all of these in 'Vatapi.' Hence the role of the sishtyas who were able to grasp the original, and then form the appropriate sangatis. Another moot point is, when these vaggeyakaras were deeply and emotionally involved, where from could have these uruttals and perattals (உருட்டல் மற்றும் பெரட்டல்) occurred? Hence the role of the many sishtyas again! In the same vein Nandini observed with us and demonstrated to us, how 'Sri Subramanyaya Namasthe' is able to allot sangatis but only for the next line 'Sarasija Koti Koti' and contrasted it with the first line, which carries only the vishranthi mood, as it is sung. 'Sarsija Koti Koti,' is even laya based or jathi based as you would observe, she added.

What could be the elements involved in sangati making, they asked themselves? They landed on the answer that it would all depend ultimately on the kind of padantharam. Each artiste has undergone a pattern and has learnt from different schools. They sang the same sahithyam, say a particular line in 'Mudhumomu' and 'Merusmana' to substantiate this. It was most explicit to the audience, a chunk of them were students. For some, all FAQ's were getting cleared (almost!) and some others who had come to watch and had fun, and also learnt many things too! (போகிற போக்கில் சிலவற்றை கவனித்து, கவனித்ததினால் கற்றுக் கொண்டவர்கள், ஏராளம் ஏராளம்!)

Another problem faced by vocalists who give other public performances (especially in marriage concerts) would be this: rasikas who know some music would ask us to sing 'Raghuvamsa Sudha', having Mandolin Srinivas always at the top of their minds. All those sangatis wonderfully done by him cannot be uttered, mind you, with the

voice. May be the instrumentalist can come out with a number of sangatis around a single swara change. No not the voice. It would not appear to be nice, I mean listenable or even hearable at all, Nandini confessed. Here Nandini sang some of the lines from the kriti to prove her point. She simultaneously requested rasikas to refrain from placing such embarrassing requests. Taken ji!

Sometimes voice capability could determine the attempt to do/form sangatis. Some sangatis are left untouched because on a particular voice, it is undoable. Unable to come out successfully, these sadly almost gets totally forgotten. She also demonstrated it, ever so skillfully to drive home this point with a number of examples.

Ramana dealt elaborately with the song 'Sarasa Sama Dhana.' Almost all sangatis are jathi (ஜதி) based in this particular song, layam is intrinsic everywhere. He said once in a while one can take the liberty to slightly fudge with the jathis ever so lightly, resulting in beauteous sangatis and aptly demonstrated these. He talked of melody centric sangatis and jathi centric and it's a matter of judgment who enjoys what most. He also added that some more jathi-centric sangatis is bound to add some energy to the song. At the same time he made a confession. "Generally, if any song if sung in a slightly slower pace than accustomed to, would prove more evocative than it used to be. Of course, some songs have their fixed tempos, but still what is suggested, is worth trying." What do you say gentlemen and ladies was the implied question here?

Ramana then played some lovely pieces to "touch and prove" many points he had covered.

Nandini quickly added that if you try to present something directly as you had learnt it from the classroom, it would serve no aesthetic purpose. Remember you are going to use this to give a public performance and the rasikas have to be always kept in mind.

ஆக சொல்லி முடித்தவை சில. நேரமின்மை காரணமாக சொல்ல இயலாமல் போனவை இன்னும்....இன்னும். இவற்றுள் சில தான் இங்கு அம்பலத்தில் ஏற்றப் பட்டுள்ளன. இந்த இளைஞர்கள் இருவரும் கோடி காட்டியவற்றையும், கோடிட்டுக் காட்டியவற்றையும், மனதில் நிறுத்தி, பாடல்களைக் கேட்டு அனுபவித்தால், நேராக சொர்க்கத்துக்குச் செல்லலாம். இது உறுதி. கடவுச் சொல் (password) ஏதும் தேவையில்லை.



So much is left out! What to do? A request is made on behalf of each one of us, to upload these lecd-ems on YouTube, for the benefit of the coming generations! An appeal to the incomparable Sri Parthasarathy Swamy Sabha! It will also be worth a second listening too!



# Akshara's Vibrant Concert: A Showcase of Confidence and Vitality

**SHARADHA VENKAT**

When the music is right, it has the power to spread joy. On the afternoon of December 28th, the young trio of Akshara Samskriti, Sivateja and Balaji brought happiness to the auditorium with their enjoyable performance.

Descending from the illustrious Gottuvadyam Narayana Iyengar's family, Akshara demonstrated her potential, proving the old proverb "மீன் குஞ்சுக்கு நீந்த கற்றுத்தர வேண்டுமா?" (Does a fish need to be taught how to swim?).

With her pleasant stage presence and natural connection with her co-artists Akshara presented a concert that resonated with charm and elegance.

The performance began with the Bhairavi Ata Tala Varnam, followed by a blend of Kalyani, Siranjani, Garudadhwani and a remarkable Ragam-Tanam-Pallavi in Hamsanandi. After the Ata Tala Varnam was Chitravina N Ravikiran's composition 'Shashadara Darashiva Priya Bhamini,' in Kalyani set to Misra chapu. The fast-paced number in the Queen of Ragas was delivered with finesse by Akshara.

The raga alapana of Sriranjani was presented neatly by both Akshara and Shivateja. Her rendition of 'Marubalka Kunna' with niraval at 'Dari nerigi santasilli natti,' followed by kalpana swarams displayed her growing confidence and artistry. Her precise rendition of sangatis, combined with a clear diction and intricate sancharas showed her musical maturity. Akshara's rendering of 'Tatvamerega Tarama' in Garudadhwani was nothing short of precise. Both kritis are compositions of Sri Thyagaraja.



The RTP is the epitome of Carnatic music virtuosity. Akshara presented a pallavi in Hamsanandi with all its elements in place. She presented the ragam, tanam, and pallavi with the lyrics: Srinivasa Venkatanatha Pahimam Dheena Charanya Jagannatha

In this segment, Akshara displayed her ability over sruti bhedam while singing the kalpana swaram. In general artists often choose to showcase this skill during the raga alapana but Akshara brought out Mohanam, Madhyamavathi, Hindolam, Suddhasaveri and Suddha dhanyasi individually, as well as in combination with ease.

This innovative approach earned them a well-deserved round of applause and demonstrated her willingness to explore new territories. Shivateja accompanied her pleasingly and perfectly. The concert concluded with an enthusiastic tani avartanam as the trio wrapped up their performance.

Akshara, a budding artist, is poised to bloom and spread her fragrance, following in the illustrious footsteps of her musical lineage.

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On December 29, 2024, J.A. Jayanth, accompanied by H.N. Bhaskar on the violin, N.C. Bharadwaj on the mridangam, and Chandrashekara Sharma on the ghatam, surprised the audience with unusual renderings on his flute. The performance began with 'Pallandu Pallandu' in Nattai. Jayanth's rendition of Subhapantavarali in a tad faster pace followed by 'Sri Sathyanarayanam' contrasted beautifully with his quiet and mesmerising Kapi. The performance also featured the lovely 'Sagara Sayana Vibho' in Bhagesri. In short, a showcase of his versatility and creativity.



## Our Sabha, Its Rasikas and Sandeep, a relationship to cherish

 S SIVAKUMAR

Sandeep Narayan in the company of other youth, all brimming with energy, as a team, were able to hold a full auditorium captive as they performed at our sabha. Just a thought! This kind of audience response came in spite of the auditorium being without the best of amenities, no plush reclining seats, no air conditioning. It has to be acknowledged that this venue has been blessed with certain energy and the artists of their own volition are ready to give them a full three hour concert-experience. And the team: B Ananthakrishnan (violin), Sai Giridhar (mridangam) and Anirudh Athreya (Khanjira).

All uruppadis (உருப்படிகள்) of the concert were praise-worthy; nevertheless, three deserve special mention. Koteeswara Iyer's composition in Varunapriya (24), 'Sringara Kumara' wafting its way, as a gentle stream with right brigas. The carnatic music community is greatly indebted to Vidwan S Rajam for painstakingly giving proper shape to these Koteeswara Iyer's treasures. Giving it on a platter, as the saying goes. Then Sandeep, gave an all-embracing alapana of Khambodhi, paying special attention to stock phrases in order not to deviate from the raga swaroopa and finally an RTP in Abheri, coming as late as a quarter to nine. The last of them was inspired by Prof. T R Subramaniam, who had however conceived it in a different ragam. In this RTP during the kalpana swara



segment, Sandeep resorted to a grahabedam, where flashes of Mohana Kalyani were made visible. We were given to understand this Pallavi (or for that matter all the other songs) were never rehearsed but the pallavi structure and tune was shared with the accompanying artistes before the concert. For Khambodhi, a Syama Sasti krithi, 'Devi Ni Padasarasamule' was taken up.

Ananthakrishnan (violin) gathered all the strength and knowledge within his ambit to carry himself with grace during the entire concert. Especially during the pallavi, he exhibited the ideal understanding and acquitted himself creditably.

This Mridangam (Sai Giridhar) and Khanjira (Anirudh) happened to be the right combination for any pallavi, standing up to all its intricacies and challenges, and during their rounds for the songs came up with an impression that they were touch artistes too. The thunderous thani of theirs presented an altogether different dimension and perspective of laya per se', they hold.



Gayatri Satya performed for the Samskriti series held at the Madras Sanskrit College, accompanied by senior violinist Dr. M. Narmadha, Kumbakonam Swaminathan on the mridangam, and Madipakkam Murali on the ghatam. The concert was rich in traditional aspects, with the senior co-artists significantly enriching the overall musical experience.

On December 27, Abilash Giriprasad delivered an energetic vocal performance, accompanied by Vaibhav Ramani on violin, B. N. Kasinadh on mridangam, and Udupi S. Srikanth on kanjira. The concert featured impressive raga elaborations of Vasantha and Kambodhi, showcasing his confidence and the entire team's skill, making the afternoon highly enjoyable.





# An unconventional exploration of music

Blessed with a good voice and under the tutelage of a Star guru in vidwan N Ravikiran, these boys – Pathangi Brothers, are on the right placement already. And as the saying goes இளம் கன்று பயம் அறியாது, they have a natural tendency to explore many unconventional shores of the vast sea of music.

Beginning with the Abhogi varnam 'Evvari bodhana,' the brothers took up Lathangi for the first exploration. Papanasam Sivan's 'Venkatamana' was rendered with neraval and swarams at 'Alamelumangai manala.' The brothers went on to sing 'Hecharika ga ra ra' in Yadukula kambhoji. This was followed by 'Ajitham anankam,' a composition of vidwan N Ravikiran in a ragam called Rajahamsa, which has only shadjam, suddha madhyamam and suddha dhaivatham. It was a racy rendition with a sparkling chittai swaram.

The main ragam of the evening was Vagadheeswari. Thyagaraja's 'Paramathmudu' was rendered with



swarams. The concert ended with a Hamsanadam tillana, another of their guru, Ravikiran's compositions.

With a very melodious voice and akaaram capabilities, the brothers tend to explore many unconventional phrases in their manodharma parts. The ease with which they are able to produce phrases one after another will be delightful to any average rasika. Their choices too suited this style of singing. As duo, the brothers tend to create many effects and they did succeed in many of these ventures.

Sanjay Suresh provided very apt accompaniment to this concert and his manodharma replies were very good. Srihari Raman on the mridangam provided sensitive accompaniment and played with good anticipation, his tani was crisp.

This team of young men Dhruv, Dathre, Sanjay and Srihari gave the rasikas a wonderful concert with a very modern outlook. They are certainly a duo to watch out for in future.

Sumithra Vasudev's concert for the Samskriti series at Madras Sanskrit College was a remarkable display of her scholastic musicianship. Her musical brilliance shone through in every piece she presented. Accompanying her were Usha Rajagopalan on the violin, Trivandrum Balaji on the mridangam, and Ram Siva on the kanjira. Their harmonious collaboration created an enriching musical experience.



Dr. Kamala Shankar captivated the audience with her exceptional performance on the Shankar guitar, a slide guitar invented by her, during the Samskriti series at Madras Sanskrit College, Chennai. This rare Hindustani concert for the city was enriched by the melodious rhythmic support of Ustad Nisar Ahmed on the tabla. The harmonious blend of the Shankar guitar and tabla created an enchanting musical experience, showcasing the rich traditions of Hindustani music. The concert was a delightful treat for the attendees.



## Cutcheri Predictions and Reality – Vignesh Ishwar and his team

 **S SIVAKUMAR**

One realizes that as years pass, vidwan TM Krishna's disciples go up the learning curve and gain in technical strength and emotional involvement to handle every element of a concert with competence. And prominent among them is Vignesh Ishwar. Here he took up a Begada alapana showing that he has the ability to spontaneously create melodic phrases within the highly valued raga structure and adhered to the raga's essence. The song was Tyagaraja's 'Lokavana Chathura.' The krithi lends itself to accommodate intricate rhythmic patterns. These were then delivered with impeccable precision and this, highlighted Vignesh's mastery over layam.

Previously a strange happening happened. Sai Rakshit (violin) was not satisfied with the quality and quantity of Anandha Bhairavi ragam (Himachala Thanaya) played for this song. And so, some more in the form of an alapana was sung/played. Ever so quietly they slipped into Todi with 'Anandha Natesa' (Vaiyacheri Ramaswamy Sivan). TMK's disciple. (யாரோட சிஷ்யனாக்கும்?) What else can he be upto! This school itself is known for its outlandish thinking, I suppose!



Vignesh's own words said elsewhere, "Neraval is a transition of sounds subject to rAgam, tALam and spacing of syllables – it, therefore, requires complete internalization of that line." This became more than evident as we heard 'Manasuna Thalachi' from 'Pakkala Nilabadi.' The line translates to "மனதில் தியானித்து மெய்மறந்து போகிறீர்களா?" (TS Parthasarathy sir's, Sri Tyagarajaswamy Keerththanaigal) Achieved, gentleman!

The violinist, Sayee Rakshit, his request being acceded to, with a second round of "anandhamyamana" Anandhabhairavi, and that must have served as a fillip to progress further with excellence. His neravals and alapanas were steeped in bhava, his accompanying style tailored to that of the vocalists.

Sumesh Narayanan (mridangam) and K V Goplakrishnan (khanjira), the laya team, showed they are top-notch, maintaining a steady rhythm while incorporating complex rhythmic patterns and variations that is crucial for an important concert like this. Their thani, in an exemplary way showed how concert space could be shared between them with no sense of domination.

The end-piece was a composition of Permal Murugan (set to tune by Arun Prakash) 'Nee Mattume' and Vignesh, treated and sang it the way a Thamizh ghazal would be sung.

As the first song 'Himachala Thanaya' got under way one realized that we were in for a great concert experience. So was it!

## Shruthi Shankar Kumar's Concert: Brisk and Bright

 **TEAM SANGEETH SARATHY**

Shruthi Shankar Kumar's vocal concert was a delightful musical journey from start to finish. She began with the Behag varnam, 'Vanajaksha,' composed by TR Subramaniam, setting a serene tone for the performance.

The concert progressed with 'Sakethanagara' in Harikambhoji by Mysore Sadaashiva Rao, featuring an intricate neraval and swaram. Shruthi's rendition was both precise and emotive, showcasing her command over the raga's nuances.

A highlight of the performance was the elaboration of Mukharo raga and Thyagaraja's 'Ksheenamai' that followed. Shruthi's interpretation of this composition, complete with neraval and swarams again, beautifully conveyed the karuna

rasa, capturing the raga's compassionate essence. Chidambaram Badrinath on the violin complemented her perfectly, with his rendition of Mukhari being particularly noteworthy.

The concert's rhythmic aspects were elevated by a riveting tani avartanam by B.N. Kasinadh on the mridangam and

Sunil Kumar on the kanjira, adding an electrifying dimension to the performance.

Shruthi concluded the concert with the Desh Tillana of Lalgudi Jayaraman to a state of bliss. From Behag to Desh, the concert was an afternoon feast for the ears, showcasing Shruthi Shankar Kumar's versatility.





# Sriranjani Santhanagopalan's Soulful Journey through ragas

**SHARADHA VENKAT**

Sriranjani delivered a mesmerising performance, showcasing her deep understanding of Carnatic music and her ability to convey emotion, knowledge, and confidence. Her concert consisted Darbar varnam, Sarasaksha in Pantuvarali, a soulful Begada, Nasika bhooshani, a classic Kaapi, Abhang, Tirupugazh, English note and Tillana.

The concert began with the Darbar varnam enriched with kalpana swarams, setting the stage for the evening. It was followed by the brisk 'Sarasaksha Paripalaya' in Pantuvarali. A crisp alapana and niraval in 'Bhamini Samudaya' with well-crafted kalpana swarams elevated the Swati Tirunal kriti, supported beautifully by Sayee Rakshith on the violin, N.C. Bharadwaj on the mridangam, and Anirudh Athreya on the kanjira.

The vakra sampoorana raga Begada stood out at its best and Sriranjani chose Subbarama Iyer's century-old padam, 'Yarukkagilum Bhayama' in Misra Chapu, as the sub-main item. She shared how this padam had been internalised over the past decade, inspired by Mukta Amma's audio recording (Thanks to Sangeetha Priya!) during her recovery from an illness. Her emotions resonated through her rendition, particularly in the unique alapanai inspired by Veenai Dhanammal's style, singing the Raga alapana after rendering the kriti. This enhances the



sensitivity to the complexities and nuances of the raga according to Muktha amma. Sriranjani's sensitivity to the complexities and nuances of Begada was evident through her exclusive and distinct prayogams. The exotic contour of Begada was instilled from the padam, said Sriranjani.

ராகம் ஒன்று கீதம் பல-- Sayee Rakshit proved this by playing Begada in two distinct and different patterns on the same day for Vignesh Ishwar and Sriranjani. சபாஷ்!

Thyagaraja's 'Maravairi ramani' in Nasika bhooshani acted as a bridge to the main piece of the day, the raga Kaapi. The alapana for Kaapi, followed by Thyagaraja's 'Inta sowkya manine' captivated the audience. Sriranjani's mastery over sahitya, niraval, and kalpana swarams showcased her command over swara, raga, laya, and bhava. Her niraval phrases too were Swara raga sudha rasa mandu.

Sayee Rakshith on the violin delivered an impeccable performance, seamlessly mirroring the vocalist while also adding his own creative touches. His adaptability and artistry shone throughout the concert.

N.C. Bharadwaj and Anirudh Athreya provided remarkable rhythmic support. The tani avartanam was a testament to their skill, blending seamlessly with the mood of the concert embodying Thyagaraja's phrase, 'Sokkajeyu Mridanga Taalamu.'

The concert also featured lighter pieces that showcased Sriranjani's versatility, including an Abhang in Charukesi, Arunagirinathar's Thiruppugazh 'Nirai madi mugam,' the evergreen English Note by Madurai Mani Iyer, and Lalgudi Jayaraman's Desh Tillana.

The graceful concert left rasikas in a delightful mood and making the evening memorable.

In the interesting lecture demonstration titled 'Understanding the Essence of Naada and Bhava' presented by Sandeep Narayan, VVS Murari, and Sai Girdhar, Sandeep delved into these crucial aspects in vocal music, elucidating how they contribute to the overall expression and emotional depth of a concert.

VVS Murari demonstrated on his violin, how naadam and bhavam can be effectively conveyed through instruments. Sai Girdhar highlighted the importance of bringing the essence of a composition to percussion. The lec-dem was an eye-opener on these beautiful elements for the attendees.





# Saketharaman's Musical Extravaganza

 **SHARADHA VENKAT**

Under the mentorship of the Jambhavan of Carnatic music, Saketharaman, a true all-rounder delivered a mellifluous concert that resonated deeply with the audience.



The concert commenced with Vasantha, an evening raga, as the first offering. 'Maragata Lingam Chintayeham' was rendered brilliantly with captivating kalpana swarams. The raaga chayai (ರಾಗಚಾಯಿ) and rendition of Papanasam Sivan's 'Balakrishnan paada malar' in Dhanyasi demonstrated Saketharaman's mastery.

Saketharaman, along with violinist L. Ramakrishnan, unveiled the saaram (essence) of Saramathi that led to Kamakshi Amman Viruttam ('Pathu viral modiram'), which concluded with an elegant shift into Ranjani. The iconic 'Ranjani Nirajani' by GNB, was rendered with intricate detail, particularly during the niraval at 'Kanjadalalochani Kamakshi.' The alternating exchanges of Kalpanaswaram between the vocalist and the violinist heightened the audience's enjoyment.

The highlight of the evening was the emotionally charged and devotional alapana in Mukhari - a solo by Saketharaman. True to the raga's ethos, Saketharaman's soulful rendition deeply moved the rasikas. Immersed in the mood of devotion, he presented Thyagaraja's

'Entha ninne,' evoking the poignant story of Shabari awaiting Lord Rama. With a focus on the phrase "Kanulara sevinchi kammani phalamula nosagi", he ensured the emotional essence lingered, making the audience feel as though Shabari herself was present - Bhaagyam Enthaninne!

Another standout rendition was V.R. Gopal Iyer's 'Thamadam Tagadaiya' in Mohanakalyani, setting the stage for a mesmerizing Ragam Tanam Pallavi (RTP) in Brindavana Saranga. Following an elaborate raga alapana by Saketharaman, L. Ramakrishnan masterfully explored the raga with nuanced pidis. Saketharaman's tanam singing characterized by jantai prayogam and akaaram with intricate phrases were particularly delightful.

Raga is an expression of bhakthi for the performer and listener - Sangita Ratnakara. With the theme of patriotism and spirituality as dual guiding lights, Saketharaman sang the uniquely crafted Pallavi on national integration set in 5 languages and 5 ragams

Tamil: Parukkulle Nalla Naadu Engal Bharatha Naadu (Brindavana Saranga)

Telugu: Elalovanti Desamu Mana Bharathamu (Bhairavi)

Kannada: Deshagalalli Shreshtavaada Desha Namma Bharatha Desha (Khamas)

Malayalam: Lokathile Valare Nalla Desam Ende Bharatha Desam (Hamsanandi)

Hindi: Sare Jahan Se Achha Hindustan Hamara (Kapi)

This innovative presentation, with each language set to a distinct raga, received a standing ovation from the audience, earning accolades for its originality and artistic brilliance.

The Tani avartanam by Vijay Natesan and Guruprasanna was another crowd-pleaser. Their rhythmic korvais elevated the concert to greater heights.

The finale featured delightful renditions like 'Smara Sundaranguni' in Paraju, 'Ramanai bhajithal' in Maand coupled with 'Baro Krishnayya,' and the Malayalam favourite 'Krishna Krishna Mukunda Janardana.' The concluding piece, Oothukadu Venkata Kavi's 'Aadadu Asangadu Vaa Kanna' in Madhyamavati, brought the concert to a memorable closure.

Saketharaman's soulful and creative concert left the audience with a sense of enjoying wholesome music, making it a truly unforgettable experience.

## Lecture Demonstration: Progressive Koraippu Patterns for Swara and Laya Prastharam



On the morning of December 23, 2024, Kunnakudi Balamuralikrishna along with Shree Sundarkumar presented and Akkarai Sornalatha presented an insightful lecture demonstration on 'Progressive Koraippu Patterns for Swara and Laya Prastharam,' with the support of Akkarai Sornalatha on the violin.

Balamuralikrishna, trained in laya under the legendary Guru Karaikkudi Mani, along with Sornalatha, who is also adept in konnakol, shared intricate details about koraippu patterns. Shree Sundarkumar shared detailed explanations of traditional and innovative koraippus. The session, filled with technical intricacies, catered primarily to music students eager to excel in their concerts though it was somewhat advanced for laypersons.

Overall, the demonstration provided valuable insights into the progressive patterns, emphasizing the depth and complexity of Carnatic music's rhythmic elements, making it an enriching experience for those deeply invested in the art form.



## A blend of tradition and creativity



TEAM SANGEETH SARATHY

Jayashree Vaidyanathan's Dec. 26th morning concert showcased her musical talents, supported by Meera Sivaramakrishnan on the violin, Manikkudi S. Chandrasekar on the mridangam, and H. Sivaramakrishnan on the ghatam. The performance began with 'Ganga Theerada' in Amurtavarshini by Purandaradasar, enhanced by swarams, setting an auspicious tone for the morning.

Her own composition, 'Gajamukane Varuvai' in Reetigowlai, followed by Patnam Subramania Iyer's 'Maravakave' in Sama. It was delicate and immersive rendition. She then took up Thyagaraja's 'Sugunamule' in Chakravagam and Patnam Subramania Iyer's 'Marivere' in Shanmukhapriya, where Jayashree's easy handling of ragam, neraval, and swaram was evident.

A notable moment was 'Kandan Seyal' in Nataikurinji by Lalgudi Jayaraman, performed with a slow, emotive touch. Jayashree's Virutham on Murugan in Hindolam smoothly transitioned into



Papanasam Sivan's 'Tiruparam Kundra Vela,' popularised by the duo Radha-Jayalakshmi years ago! Her rendition of Shyama Sastry's 'Enneramum' in Purvikalyani with detailed ragam, neraval, and swaram was significant.

The brief and enjoyable tani avarthanam by Manikkudi S. Chandrasekar and H. Sivaramakrishnan needs a special mention.

Papanasam Sivan's 'Balakrishnan' in Dhanyasi was followed by the RTP in Dharmavati set to Kanda Triputai, featuring trikalam of pallavi lines 'vinnu mannum alanda vishwaropane, srinivasane

govindane.' Her raga alapana, tanam, neraval, and swaram were performed with precision. Meera Sivaramakrishnan, a seasoned violinist, was an shadow of the singer during the kritis while exhibiting her prowess during her solo sessions. Her elaboration of Shanmukhapriya and Dharmavati were precise and noteworthy.

The concert included a Virutham in Revathi, leading into her own composition 'Adal Arasan' in the same raga. She concluded with a lively rendition of Kalki Krishnamurthy's 'Pookuyil Koovum' in Kapi.

## Trichur Brothers, Srikrishna and Ramkumar Mohan - Song selection suits their voices



S SIVAKUMAR

After some finest of fine mic adjustments, after the varnam, Trichur Brothers sang the glorious and evergreen, Mangalampalli Balamuralikrishna's (MBK) Arabhi composition, 'Mahadeva Sutham,' almost forgotten these days. It sports a chittaiswaram too, bearing the MBK stamp all the way. The brothers did ample justice to the composer and the composition.

Slowly as time passed one realized there wasn't a violin accompaniment but it was a strong laya front with Parveen Sparsh on the mridangam, B S Purushothaman on the Khanjira and Sai Subramaniam on the morsing. Are they experimenting with this new format? May be!

When 'Jamboopathe' (Dikshithar, Yamuna Kalyani) came up next, what would have impressed everyone was the change in the very tone of the laya trio (for a change) that had as its main ingredient the softest of strokes.

The choice of compositions and the raga singing style would have matched any drawn from the established high-



brow singers and their advantage being they could sing louder and louder and could sound sweet still, especially while negotiating the top octaves. Their raga choice fell on Vasantha Bhairavi and the song, (you need not hazard a guess) was 'Nee Dhaya Radha.' The swaras appended could have been limited at some point.

'Vanchathonu Na,' a Hrikeshanallur composition which typifies the raga (Karnaranjani) shining with all its elements came invited, "harmonizing" effect imparted by the brothers, that drew spontaneous applause from the listeners. This was also sung well, comprehending the features of the raga to a nicety. Various

combinations were explored by them for the chitta swaram associated with this song, gelled well with the audience. 'Naan oru Vilayattu Bommaya,' Papanasam Sivan's glorious paattu came as a filler. Later for their Pallavi they picked up a line from the Thiruppugazh, 'MuththaiTharu Pathi Thirunagai' where during the preceding Thanam, the juxtaposing their voices was handsomely done.

The laya three some came up with a thani that remained commendable, as there were three men in the same boat and clever allocation was the need of the hour. The thani not surprisingly became a stroke-filled exercise.



# Padmashree Srinivasan's Concert of Serenity and Classicism


**V MOHAN**

In the afternoon slot for intended promising young musicians, the concert by vocalist Padmashree Srinivasan would have been of interest to listeners who look for serenity and classicism in the music. Hailing from a musical family, Padmashree began learning music at age five. Though taught by various teachers, it was her respected guru, the late Smt. Ambujam Vedantham of Tiruchirapalli, who shaped her into a high-caliber artist. With a postgraduate degree and professional training in dance, Padmashree has emerged as a singer deeply rooted in classicism and dedicated to the 'padantharam' learned from her guru.

Starting her concert with 'Amboruha Padame Nammiti,' a sprightly varnam in Ranjani by GNB, Padmashree moved on to 'Sattaleni Dinamulu Vaccena' by Thyagaraja in Naganandini, the 30th melakarta. She made a brief alapana of this vivadi raga, carefully treading through the phrases, as delineation of Vivadhi ragas sometimes pose challenges. A few swara phrases appended to the kriti enabled the vocalist to present this relatively minor kriti in a brighter light.

Another kriti in the sub-major category, which was presented comprehensively, was 'Hiranmayim Lakshmi Sada Bhajami' by Dikshitar in Lalitha. This piece was beautified with a brief alapana, niraval at 'Gita Vadya Vinodhinim Girijam Taam Indiraam,' and a few avartas of fast-paced swaras.

One praiseworthy feature of Padmashree's concerts is her commitment to covering a wide range of composers, including the Trinity and post-Trinity composers. In this concert, besides Thyagaraja and Dikshitar, she performed compositions by Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar ('Paritapamula Dircci Palimpumayya' in Kannada), Mysore Vasudevachar, GNB, and Lalgudi Jayaraman. The eleventh Tiruppavai, 'Katr Karavai Kanangal Pala Karandhu' in Huseni, was also included.

Padmashree chose 'Ninne Nammitinayya Shri Rama' by Mysore Vasudevachar in Simhendra Madhyamam as the main piece. A well-shaped alapana of the main raga, bringing out the distinct color of Simhendra Madhyamam, prefaced the kriti. Niraval was done at the customary place in this kriti, 'Pannagendra Shayana Pannagari Vahana.' Padmashree's swara



phrases, fitting the status of the kriti as the main piece, were sung eschewing lightning and thunder by way of an overdose of arithmetic.

The concert concluded with a thillana of Lalgudi Jayaraman in Behag, with the Charanam lines starting as, 'Madhavan Maruga Malarinai Padame Gatiyena Panindhen'.

Young Sahana Vasudevan, proficient in both vocal music and violin playing, was under the tutelage of Sri P.S.Narayanaswamy, for many years and also learnt music, living in the US. A recipient of many awards, Sahana showcased her playing skills and proved to be a faithful accompanist.

Lalit Kovvuri, who gave mridangam support, is a well accomplished artist, trained not only in mridangam, as a student of vidwan S.V. Ramani, a disciple of vidwan Guruvayur Durai, but also in violin and vocal music, trained by Anuradha Sridhar, niece of the violin virtuoso, Lalgudi Jayaraman. His thani, following the main piece, was of outstanding quality and despite playing without the advantage of an Upa Pakka Vadyam, he provided wholesome percussion support.

The concert of Padmashree which flowed like a tranquil stream provided music soothing to the ears and pleasing to the mind.



Vivek Moozhikulam supported by Chetana Shekar on the violin, Sunaadha Krishna on the mridangam, and Vishnu V. Kammath on the kanjira presented a traditionally rich concert. The concert opened with 'Sri Parthasarathyna' in Suddha Dhanyasi by Dikshitar, followed by 'Kapali' in Mohanam.

The Mukhari alapana, leading into 'Arivar Yaar Unnai Poi' by Arunachala Kavirayar, was rendered with deep emotion. 'Nambikettavar evarayya' in Hindolam showcased Vivek's versatility and command over his rag and language.

The main number in Kalyani 'Kanden Kali Theerthen', by Gopalakrishna Bharathi, was performed with exceptional clarity and depth.



## சாந்தமும் சாரமும் சேர்ந்த சங்கீதம்

**சாரதா வெங்கட்**

ரஞ்சனியின் சங்கீதம் எந்த விதமான சலசலப்பும் இல்லாத அமைதியான நீரோட்டம் போல தெளிவாக இருந்தது. திருவொற்றியூர் தியாகையரின் தர்பார் வர்ணத்துடன் துவங்கிய கச்சேரி, கம்பீரநாட்டை, தவிஜாவந்தி, நளினகாந்தி, சிம்மேந்திர மத்யமம், மோஹனம், ஹம்ஸநாதம் என படிப்படியாக உயர்ந்து திருப்புகழுடன் நிறைவடைந்தது.

ஜெய சாமராஜ உடையாரின் 'ஸ்ரீ ஜாலந்தரமாஸ்ரயாம்யஹம்,' கம்பீர நாட்டை ராகத்தில் கம்பீரமாக பாடப் பெற்றது. அடுத்து தவிஜாவந்தி ராகத்தில் தீட்சிதரின் 'அகிலாண்டேஸ்வரி' அவசரமில்லாத அணுகுமுறையில் குழைந்தது. தொடர்ந்தது நளினம்.

'ஸ்ரீவ மங்கள மாங்கல்யே' ஸ்லோகத்தை நளினகாந்தி ராகத்தில் விருத்தமாகப் பாடி, கல்யாணி வரதராஜனின் 'அபர்ணா பார்வதீ' என்னும் கீர்த்தனையைத் திருத்தமாகப் பாடினார். இதனைத் தொடர்ந்தது சிம்மேந்திர மத்யம இராக ஆலாபனை. ரஞ்சனியும் பத்ரிநாத்தும் முறைப்படி சஞ்சாரம் செய்தனர். மைசூர் வாசுதேவாச்சாரியாரின் 'நின்னே நம்மிதின்யா ஸ்ரீராமா' என்ற கீர்த்தனையை அனுபவித்துப் பாடினார். 'பன்னகேந்திர சயன்'



என்னும் வரிகளில் கல்பனா ஸ்வரங்கள் பாடப்பட்டன. மிருதங்கம் வாசித்த ப்ரசாந்த பக்கபலமாக, ரசனையுடன் வாசித்தார்.

ரஞ்சனியின் கச்சேரி முதலில் முறைப்படி வர்ணம், பின் இரண்டு கீர்த்தனைகள், அடுத்து விருத்தத்துடன் கூடிய கீர்த்தனை, பின் ராக ஆலாபனை மற்றும் ஸ்வரங்களுடன் கூடிய கீர்த்தனை என விஸ்தரித்து மோஹனத்தில் முழுமையாக மின்னியது.

ஆர்ப்பரிப்போ அலங்காரங்களோ இல்லாத அழகான மோஹனத்தை வழங்கினார். ஒவ்வொரு ஸ்வரமாக அனுபவித்து பாடியது மனதிற்கு இதமாக இருந்தது. தியாகராஜரின் 'நன்னுபாலிம்ப' பாடி, 'ஸுரபதி நீலமணிநி பதனுவுதோ' வில் நிரவலும் கல்பனா

ஸ்வரங்களும் பாடினார். ஸ்வராக்கஷரங்களான ஸு(ச)ர(ரி) ப(ப)தி(து) யை திருத்தமாகப் பாடி மோஹனத்தை முழுமை பெறச் செய்தார்.

இதனைத் தொடர்ந்தது தனி ஆவர்த்தனம். பாட்டுக்கு பக்கபலமாக வாசித்த ப்ரசாந்த தனியில் துரித கதியில் வாசித்து பாராட்டைப் பெற்றார். ரவிக்கிரணின் ஹம்ஸநாத தில்லானாவையும், அருணகிரி நாதரின் 'ஆரமுதமான தந்தி மணவாளா' என்னும் பழமுதிர்சோலை திருப்புகழையும் பாடி நிகழ்ச்சியை நிறைவு செய்தார், ரஞ்சனி.

அரியக்குடி ராமானுஜ ஐயங்காரரின் வழிகாட்டுதலில் கச்சேரியை வடிவமைத்து, பாராட்டுக்கள் பெற்ற ரஞ்சனிக்கு மனமார்ந்த வாழ்த்துக்கள்.

## Ramana Balachandhran – Display of Virtuosity



Ramana Balachandhran's veena concert was an absolute display of virtuosity and skill. He has been playing the veena from when he was a little boy and has mastered the instrument with total control over it. Blessed with a good voice too, he does a vocal-veena concert.

He started with a Hamsanandi piece, a composition by Dr. Balamurali Krishna

and followed this with an elaborate raga alapana in Sama and the kriti 'Santamu leka of Tyagaraja. 'Sobillu saptaswara' was rendered next with a speed that was rather unique to that song. Kanadaa ragam, tanam, pallavi followed in Misra Chapu – 'raghu kula soma, kodanda rama, daya nidhe, karuna nidhe' were the words. Ramana showed wizardry in

**SIVAPRIYA KRISHNAN**

tala variations in the Pallavi, creating a mesmerism around it. The vittalā repetition at the end of the abhang, 'Pavalo Pandari' and Arunachala Siva a well-known bhajan evoked a 'sing and clap along' audience participation in large numbers.

Ramana's veena that evening left everyone bedazzled and stunned. However, it also left one wondering if the skill and virtuosity overtook the vishranti element and the dainty classicism of the veena. The sound of the veena has changed in recent times with the amplification and plucking parameters to sound more like an electric base-guitar and hereto one felt that.

Patri Satishkumar and Suresh Vaidyanathan kept up with the speed and the adrenaline rush of the concert.

### WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

We value your feedback about this newsletter. You are welcome to share your thoughts on the concerts and lec-dems you attend here at Sri Parthasarathy Swami Sabha. mail them to : [sangeethsarathy@gmail.com](mailto:sangeethsarathy@gmail.com)



## KALAPRAMANAM



On the morning of December 27, vidwan Bharat Sundar presented an enlightening lecture demonstration on 'Kalapramanam: Importance of Space in Tala.' He delved into the nuances of kalapramanam, or tempo, and highlighted how the strategic use of space within tala can enhance musical expression. Through practical examples and engaging explanations, he illustrated the significance of pauses and timing in creating rhythm and flow in compositions and swara exercises. The session was both educational and inspiring for musicians and enthusiasts alike.



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# Bhakti: The Guiding Principles of Carnatic Music



**RAJAGOPALAN VENKATRAMAN**

Vidwan Saketharaman emphasized the central role of Bhakti in Carnatic Music. While musicians are constantly seeking to expand their musical repertoire, the core principles of Carnatic music—rooted in devotion—must never be compromised. In an era where the musical ecosystem is divided and fragmented, he called for unity and innovation that respects the tradition's essential values.

The 3Es of Carnatic Music are Entertainment, Education, and Elevation. While entertainment and education of musical techniques are foundational, the highest purpose is elevation through Bhakti. Musicians must strive for attaining spiritual bliss through their art and pass it on to their audience.

The idea of breaking established norms for the sake of innovation is fashionable but true innovation must respect the fundamental principles of the art form. Just as there are rules in sports or professional settings, so are in music.

Purandaradasar speaks of the essential elements required for a well-rounded performance —Tala (rhythm), Melam (structure), and Shanta Vela (quiet time). Tabla maestro Ustad Zakir Hussain revered Goddess Saraswati and Lord Ganapati. The Beatles found spiritual bliss chanting the name of Hare Krishna. Renowned mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan believed that equations were meaningful only when they expressed divine thought.

Saketharaman demonstrated the significance of emotion and correct Kalapramanam in bringing out the true meaning of a composition. His rendition of 'Asai mukham marandu poche' and the Papanasam Sivan lullaby 'kanne en kanmaniye' illustrated how singing with the right emotional intensity and adherence to the proper tempo is essential to convey the devotional essence of the music.

In sum, Vidwan Saketharaman emphasized that the spiritual and



devotional essence of Carnatic music should remain at its heart, guiding both performers and listeners towards a deeper connection with the divine. Innovations in technique and presentation are welcome, but they must always be grounded in the core values of Bhakti.

Well-known orator, Bharati Bhaskar asserted that rasikas need not be experts in ragas or musical theory to appreciate the essence of music. However, they need to respect the extraordinary efforts of musicians enable the listener to experience a deep spiritual connection.

She highlighted the historical role of music in the Bhakti movement. During the Sangam period, Paanars would sing Pannisai, and after a lull following the Silappadikaram times, music was revived by the Bhakti saints. Tirugnanasambandar, a Brahmin, and Tirunilakanda Yazhpanar, from a lower caste, travelled together, spreading devotion through their music in temples.

She recalled the story of Sivakami, who cured the leprosy of Muthu Thandavar in Chidambaram, leading him to begin singing devotional padhikams. She spoke about how Araiyaars brought Sri Ramanuja back to Srirangam from Kanchipuram using their musical prowess. She emphasized that the Vaggeyakaras used music as a tool to express and elevate their own Bhakti, creating compositions that serve as conduits to divine devotion.