



SRI PARTHASARATHY SWAMI SABHA

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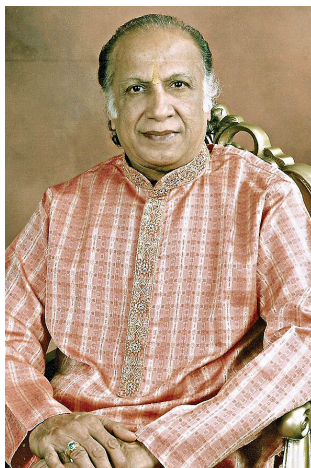
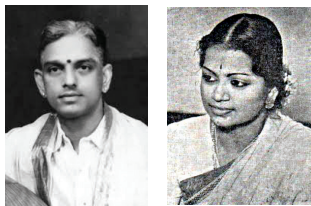
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SANGEETHA SARATHY

2024 SANGEETHA KALASARATHYS

Sri Trichur V. Ramachandran

Namaskaram to all rasikas. It is with great happiness and joy that I have come to know that I have been chosen for the "Sangeetha Kalasarathy", a prestigious award given to senior vidwans, instituted by Sri Parthasarathy Swami Sabha, arguably the oldest sabha in Madras. I thank Sri Nalli Kuppaswamy Chetty, Sri Krishnamurthy, Sri V. V. Sundaram, Sri Sashikiran, Sri Veeraraghavan and the entire committee and office bearers for choosing me.



A special aspect is that my beloved Guru, Sri GNB's father, Gudalur Sri V. Narayanaswamy, educationist, scholar and musician, was one of the Founders of this sabha. Sri GNB told me many a time, about his father's friendship with all great musicians like Ariyakkudi, Chembai, Palladam Sanjeeva Rao, Konerirajapuram, Maharajapuram Viswanathalyer, Tanjavur Vaidyanathalyer and others who were always visiting and exchanging music and musical ideas at his home. They also have sung at this sabha.

More than 100 years have passed, and this exemplary Sabha holds its head aloft, dedicating itself to arts in an aesthetic manner. It is always a pleasure to sing for this sabha where the audience would be composed mainly of knowledgeable rasikas.

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Sri Srimushnam V. Raja Rao



Mridangam Maestro Sri Srimushnam V. Raja Rao, who is being conferred with the prestigious award of Sangeetha Kalasarathy for the year 2024 by, Sri Parthasarathy Swamy Sabha, is veritably a multi dimensional personality and a multi talented artist – an internationally acclaimed mridangist, an artist who is also well versed in vocal music, though not a performing artist, a well respected teacher and a Margadarsi for many artists and students of music and above all, a talented organizer. Hailing from a family dedicated to Carnatic music, particularly percussion, for well over four generations, Sri Raja Rao, has to his credit, a musical career spanning over six decades. Considering that Sri Raja Rao's father, Sri Venkataramana Rao, had training in both mridangam and vocal music, simultaneously, under Thanjavur Ramadass Rao and the legendary Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, respectively,

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Shri Mohan Kurup

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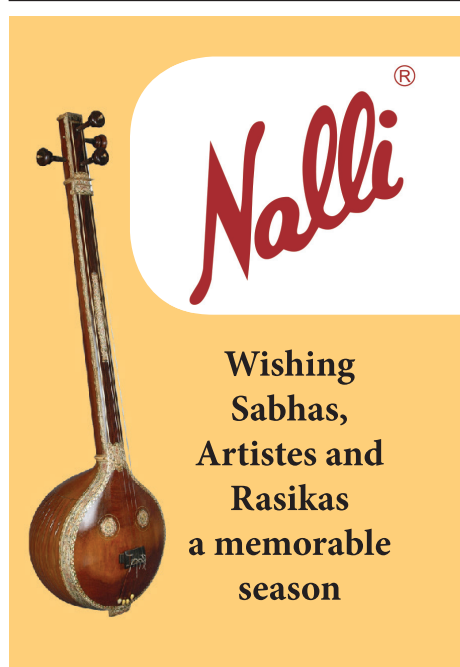
Sangeetha Kalasarathy : Sri Trichur V. Ramachandran

I once again thank everyone for this recognition, which is of immense value in Chennai and the global music scene too. This Sabha is probably the only one conducting a number of music series and festivals along and with Carnatica and also conducts the Cleveland Tyagaraja festival. It also encourages globally-talented youngsters, with the help of great Dhanavaans like Sri Nalli. In this sabha the rasikas want more from us, vidwans. The exciting and novel lecture demonstrations are also on a par with any other Sabha.

Other awards won by this GNB's ardent disciple, Sri V Ramachandran have been Padma Bhushan, Sangita Kalanidhi, Sangita Choodamani, Sangita Ratnakara and Kalaimamani.

I have to humbly state the nature of my GuruBhakthi is well known to all rasikas and also my music reflects all the great qualities of GNB sir. I have been a primary exponent of GNB's own compositions and also those that have been popularised by him. I am presently doing my involved research on Dikshithar krithis. I have had the privilege of performing all over India and have also travelled far and wide over the globe taking my Guru's bhani faithfully, which has had its inspiration from my guru GNB sir and Smt. M L Vasanthakumari.

... As told to **S SIVAKUMAR**



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Sangeetha Kalasarathy : Sri Srimushnam V. Raja Rao

there is no surprise that Sri Raja Rao was able to acquire equal competence in both percussion and vocal music, though he took to percussion as a career in keeping with his family tradition. Sri Raja Rao had his initial training in mridangam under his father and later under the well known guru, Sri Kumbakonam Rajappa Iyer. Sri Raja Rao says that he fulfilled his father's wish by training himself to be a competent vocalist also, coached initially, by Sri Mayavaram Vaidyanatha Iyer and later by the renowned Sri Calcutta Krishnamurthy. After he moved from Srimushnam to Chennai, he also had the unique fortune to stay in the 'out house' of the great composer, Sri Papanasam Sivan, for a few months, along with one of Sivan's primary disciples.

Even as a young boy, Sri Raja Rao had the opportunity to accompany senior vocalists. One of his early achievements was to get exemption to perform in the All India Radio, even before he could become a graded artist, for which the minimum age was sixteen.

Sri Raja Rao who is proud about his connection with Sri Parthasarathy Swamy Sabha dating back to the 1980s, recalls how he had the opportunity to associate himself with the task of organizing the concerts of the Sabha, along with the office bearers of the Sabha.

His organizing skills found full expression after Sri Raja Rao became one of the Secretaries of Sri Thyaga Brahma Mahotsave Sabha, Tiruvaiyaru. His association with the Mahotsava Sabha had its origins over 50 years back, when he, under the guidance of the great mridangist, Late Sri Thanjavur Upendran, involved himself in matters relating to organising of concerts. Over the years, he became one of the two Secretaries of the Mahotsava Sabha, a post that he is holding for over 15 years. By virtue of holding a post which requires dealing with hundreds of artists every year when the Thyagaraja Aradhana is conducted, Sri Raja Rao, a naturally very affable and humble person, has endeared himself to hundreds of artists of all seniorities and ages.

Sri Raja Rao, who has been accompanying many reputed artists in their trips abroad, has to his credit, several awards received both in India and abroad, of which, Kalaimamani from the Govt of Tamilnadu, Sangeetha Choodamani from Krishna Gana Sabha, Tamil Isai Vendar from Karthik Fine Arts, Sangeetha Kalasikhamani from The Indian Fine Arts Society, Sangeetha Kala Nipuna from The Mylapore Fine Arts Club and Nada Brahmam from Narada Gana Sabha are noteworthy. Sri Raja Rao has been honoured with the title of 'Asthana Vidwan' by many Mutts and Peetams, such as, Sri Sharada Peetam, Sringeri. Sri Raja Rao has also given many solo performances and lecture demonstrations in both India and abroad.

Among his many accomplishments, such as, being an exponent of Kanjira and Mohersing, Sri Raja Rao has also composed many Krithis and Thillanas in Kannada and Tamil, besides tuning several compositions of Saint Purandaradasa, whose compositions he has been propagating.

Sri Raja Rao, over the past many years, has trained several artists, not only in percussion but also in vocal music. A strict adherent to tradition that he is, Sri Raja Rao has also been following the 'Gurukula' method of training at his residence in Chennai. Among his many disciples, are such talented and busy percussion artists as, Poongulam Subramaniam, M. S. Venkatasubramanian, Neyveli Ramkumar and Nanganallur Swaminathan, a busy Ghatam player.

Sri Raja Rao's wife, Padma is the daughter of the well known novelist, Sandilyan and their only son, Raghavendra Raja Rao, is a busy music composer and lyric writer in the Tamil film industry, known by the name, Sean Roldan..

... Interview by **V MOHAN**

2024 ACHARYA SARATHY Dr. Rukmini Ramani

ஆசார்ய ஸாரதி விருது பெறும் முனைவர் ருக்மிணி ரமணி : சிறந்த அனுபவமும், சங்கீதத்தில் ஈடுபாடும் கொண்ட வல்லுனர்கள், ஒத்த மனஇசைவுடன் பல ஆண்டுகளாக நடத்தி வரும் சென்னையில் உள்ள பார்த்தசாரதி சுவாமி சபா, இந்த வருடம், ஆசார்ய ஸாரதி விருதினை அளித்து, டாக்டர் ருக்மிணி ரமணி அவர்களை கௌரவிக்கிறது. அருமையான தேர்வு. தமிழ் தியாகையா என்று போற்றப்பட்ட பாபநாசம் சிவன் அவர்களின் மகளான இவர், தந்தையின் இசை வாரிசாக, அவர் அமைத்த ராஜபாட்டையில் பயணிக்கிறார்.

இந்த விருதினைப் பற்றிக் கேட்ட போது ருக்மிணி ரமணி மனம் நெகிழ்ந்து கூறினார், “நூறு ஆண்டுகளுக்கு மேல் கர்னாடக இசையினைப் போற்றி வளர்த்து வரும் பார்த்தசாரதி ஸ்வாமி சபா என்மனதுக்கு மிகவும் நெருக்கமானது. சபாவை நடத்தி வருபவர்கள் கலைஞர்கள் மீது மட்டுமின்றி, ரசிகர்கள் மீதும் அன்பும், மரியாதையும், எளிமையும் நிறைந்தவர்கள். என் மகன் அசோக் ரமணியும் இந்த சபா அளித்த விருதைப் பெற்றவர் என்ற மகிழ்ச்சி இப்போது இரட்டிப்பாகிறது” என்றார் ருக்மிணி.

ருக்மிணியின் இசைப்பயணம் தந்தையில் வழிகாட்டுதலினால் சிறு வயதினிலேயே அரும்புவிட்டது. நாளடைவில் இசையின் நுணுக்கங்கள் இரத்ததுடன் கலந்து தமிழின் ஆளுமை நாடி நரம்புகளில் வியாபித்து நின்று, இவரது இசையின் பெருமை மலர்ந்து மனம் வீசத் தொடங்கியது.

தன் தந்தையின் பெயரில் “சிவன் ஆர்ட்ஸ் அகாடமி” என்ற இசைப்பள்ளியை நான்கு வேறு இடங்களில் சென்னையில் நிறுவி வெற்றிகரமாக நடத்தி வருகிறார். இதில் பயின்ற பல மாணவ மாணவிகள், இசையில் தேர்ச்சி பெற்று, ஆசிரியர்களாகவும், மேடைக் கலைஞர்களாகவும் விளங்குகின்றார்கள். இப்பள்ளிகளில் வாய்ப்பாட்டு மட்டுமின்றி, வயலின், கீபோர்டு, வீணை ஆகியவையும் கற்றுத் தரப்படுகிறது.

இவர் மீதுள்ள அபரிமிதமான அன்பினாலும், மரியாதையாலும், இவரது மாணவர்கள் பன்னிருவர் இணைந்து, “சிவானுகரஹ” என்ற அமைப்பை நிறுவி இதன் மூலம் ஆசிரியர் ருக்மிணி ரமணியின் அற்புதப் படைப்புக்களை மேடையேற்றுகின்றனர்; புத்தகங்களாக வெளியிடுகின்றனர், போட்டிகள் வைத்து இளம் மாணவ மாணவிகள் குரு ருக்மிணியின் படைப்புகளை அறிந்து கொள்ள வழிவகுக்கின்றனர்.



டாக்டர் ருக்மிணி ரமணியின் இசைப் பாடல்களின் பட்டியல் மிக நீளமானது: கீதங்கள், தான வர்ணங்கள், பதவர்ணங்கள், ஜதீஸ்வரம், தில்லானாக்கள் ஆகிய இசை வடிவங்களும் இரண்டாயிரத்திற்கும் மேற்பட்ட கீர்த்தனைகளையும் இயற்றியிருக்கிறார். “சிவகுமரி” என்பது இவரது முத்திரையாகும்.

இவரது போற்றத்தக்க உந்துதலில் உருவாகிய போற்றத்தக்க இசை நாட்டிய நாடகங்கள் ஏராளம். ராகவேந்திரா, மீரா, தான் தோன்றிப் பெருமாள், ராமாயணத்தில் நவரஸம், தேவமாதர்கள், அறுபடை வீடு, வீரம் விளைந்த பூமி என்னும் நமது நாட்டு சுதந்திரப் போராட்ட வீரர்கள் சரித்திரம்.... இன்னும் பலப்பல இவருக்கு, இவரது படைப்புத்திறமைக்கு கட்டியம் கூறும் வகையில் அமைந்தவை.

தமிழிலும் மணிப்பிரவாள மொழியிலும், சம்ஸ்கிருதத்திலும் இவர் இயற்றிய க்ருதிகள் கணக்கில் அடங்காதவை. 108 திவ்ய தேசம், திருவாரூர் பஞ்சரத்னம், கபாலீஸ்வரர் பஞ்சரத்னம், பன்னிரண்டு ஜோதிரலிங்க பஞ்சபூதக் கிருதிகள், சப்த விடங்கக் க்ருதிகள் போன்றவை மிகவும் பிரபலமானவை. இவரது கீர்த்தனைகளை முன்னணிக் கலைஞர்களான சுதா ரகுனாதன், செளமயா, காயத்ரி கிரீஷ் போன்றவர்கள் அடிக்கடி மேடையில் பாடி ரசிகனைக் கவர்கின்றனர்.

குறிப்பாக சுமனேஸ் ரஞ்சனி ராகத்தில் திருவல்லிக்கேணி பெருமாள் பார்த்தசாரதி பற்றி இயற்றிய “பார்த்த சாரதி என்னைப் பார்த்த சாரதி” என்று தொடங்கும் பாடல் கேட்போரை வசீகரிக்கக் கூடியது. பல வித்வான் வித்வாம்சினிகள் இந்தப் பாடலை மேடையில் பாடுவது வழக்கம். குறிப்பாக நமது பார்த்தசாரதி சுவாமி சபாவில் பலமுறை இந்த ரசிக்கத்தக்க பாடல் அரங்கேறியிருப்பது குறிப்பிடத்தக்கது.

இந்த ஆண்டின் “ஆசார்ய ஸாரதி” விருதைப் பெறும் டாக்டர் ருக்மிணி ரமணியின் ஆசிரியப்பணியும் இசைப்பயணமும் மேலும் தொடர பார்த்தசாரதி பெருமாள் அருள் வேண்டி, அவரையும் வாழ்த்துகிறோம்.

... Interview by **Dr. CHANDRIKA RAJARAM**

from the
ARCHIVES



Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu Award: Sri T K V Ramanujacharyulu

I feel very much happy on getting this award instituted in the name of Legendary Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu Garu and am thankful to Sri Parthasarathy Swami Saba for choosing me.

I owe my initial training to my father, T K Ramanujacharyulu a renowned flutist, and advanced training to my maternal uncle, "SangeetaSahityaKalanidhi" Sriman N ChKrishnamacharyulu Garu, a disciple of Parupalli Ramakrishna Pantulu Garu. This lineage connects me directly to the great Tyagaraja Swami.

My guru, a fervent admirer of Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu, instilled in me the diverse styles and techniques of renowned masters like Pappa Venkatramaiah, Kumbakonam Rajamanickam Pillai, Mysore T Chowdaiah and Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu garu. Dwaram's influence was particularly profound, shaping my musical journey.

This award holds special significance as it coincides with the centenary year of my guru, Sri N ChKrishnamacharyulu. We, sishyas, have been holding year-long celebrations remembering him. It is particularly gratifying that this gift has been bestowed upon us during his centenary year. That is the reason I am doubly happy for this award. It also marks my 50th year of performing, a testament to my dedication to the art form.

During my career at All India Radio, Trichy, I had distinguished myself with two special programmes viz. Tyagaraja Krithi Vilakkam for about 20 years. Another was entitled Raga Rasam, which ran for 300 episodes and was aimed at the general



audience. This program offered a comprehensive introduction to ragas for general audience to inculcate musical knowledge.

I have had the privilege of collaborating with numerous esteemed musicians, both established and emerging. As I pass the torch to the next generation, I urge them to cherish and preserve our rich musical heritage.

I am humbled and privileged to tread the path illuminated by my beloved Guru and luminaries such as Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu Garu.

... As told to **S SIVAKUMAR**

Dr MLV Award : Sri Sunil R Gargyan

Sunil R Gargyan is a young musician who has carved a space for himself in the music world. He was introduced to this wonderful art form at a very early age by his family, especially his grandmother and his father. Sunil says it is God's blessing that carnatic music chose to come to him. To him, music is a penance and is more of a lifestyle and right from his toddler times, it is music that has been with him.



Sunil started his music learning from Sri Nagai Bhashyam and then moved under the tutelage of Sri PB Srirangachari. It was Padma Bhushan vidwan Sri PS Narayanaswamy, under whose training did he bloom into a wonderful musician. As we get to know, PSN was a guru who groomed his disciples to find their own spark and create their own style and space in music. This is rather obvious in what we see in Sunil today. He presently takes guidance from Sri Sriram Parasuram.

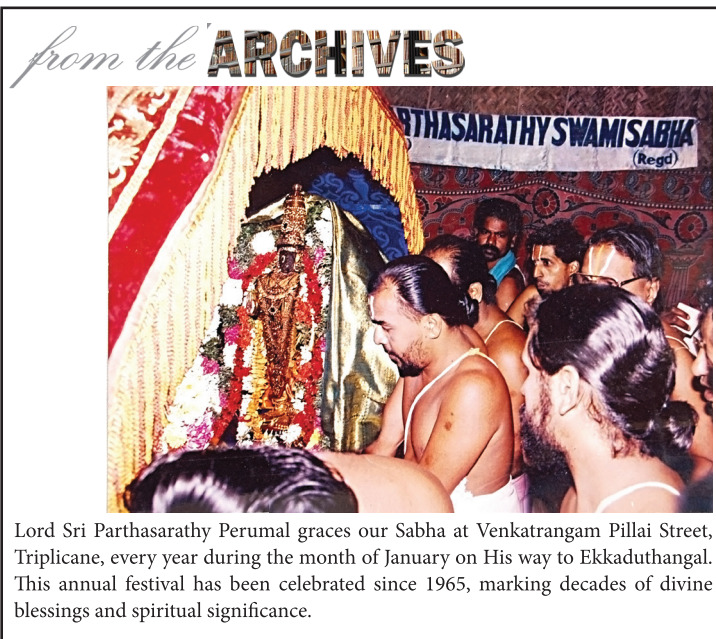
Sunil had always wished to perform at Parthasarathy Sabha as it is one of the oldest and most prestigious sabhas in the city. He was drawn to all the lecdems and concerts at our Sabha right from the early age and is very happy that they have been recognising and giving opportunity to perform at the appropriate juncture.

As a budding musician, Sunil says he was always fascinated by the music and aura of vidwan Sri GN Balasubramanian and

the power and prowess in the music of Smt ML Vasanthakumari. In his own words "As a musician, I've always had such an awe towards MLV Amma's music and as a rasika, that subtle way of handling such strong style, can never go unnoticed."

Sunil is extremely thankful towards Parthasarathy Sabha, its office bearers and jury of this award, for they have been encouraging and supporting him through his music journey and selecting for this prestigious award.

... As told to **R BHARATHWAJ**



Lord Sri Parthasarathy Perumal graces our Sabha at Venkatragam Pillai Street, Triplicane, every year during the month of January on His way to Ekkaduthangal. This annual festival has been celebrated since 1965, marking decades of divine blessings and spiritual significance.

Gottuvadyam Narayana Iyengar Award: Ghatam Dr. S. Karthick

Q: How long have you been on this musical journey?

A: I am 53 years old and started performing at 14. This marks my 38th year in music, filled with enriching experiences.

Q: What did you learn from your gurus Vikku Vinayakram and Subhash Chandran?

A: Vikku sir taught me the fundamentals and concert-specific techniques, while Subhash sir introduced me to the mathematical intricacies of rhythm. I've been with my guru for 45 years since joining his class at age 8, which has been a transformative journey.



Q: Could you share about your PhD?

A: My thesis focused on "Musical Instruments in Sanskrit Literature," which drew from my background as a Sanskrit student during my academic years.

Q: What inspired your diverse compositions?

A: My mother, a singer, nurtured my musical ear early on. I also trained in vocal music under Thiruvengadu Jayaraman and Vairamangalam Lakshmi Narayanan. My love for wordplay often led me to use raga mudras and swaraksharas, and many of my works have been adopted by dancers.

Q: What is your involvement in film music?

A: I've collaborated with legendary composers like Ilaiyaraaja, A. R. Rahman, Harris Jayaraj, and others. My contributions span several genres and creative endeavors.

Q: You're known for your creativity.

A: Thank you! I've explored unique genres, including Tamil ghazals. I also enjoy creative pursuits like mimicry and collaborating with Hindustani musicians.

Q: Do your students from abroad start from scratch?

A: Most are accomplished musicians who want to learn ghatam or konnakkol as an additional skill to expand their expertise.

Q: Tell us about your troupe.

A: My troupe, Heart Beat, recently celebrated 25 years of musical excellence, marking a significant milestone in our journey together.

Q: How long have you been associated with Sri Parthasarathy Swami Sabha?

A: For nearly three decades, starting in my teenage years, this association has been a source of immense pride and joy.

Q: Congratulations on receiving the Gottuvadyam Narayana Iyengar award.

A: Thank you! This award, honoring special instruments, is particularly meaningful coming from India's oldest sabha. I have fond memories of attending concerts here as a child, making this recognition deeply special and nostalgic.

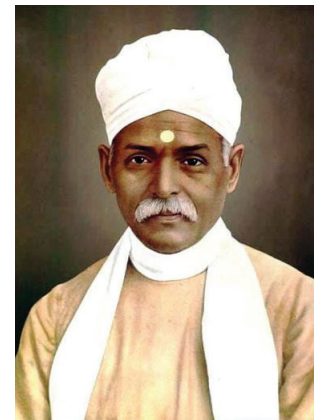
... Interview by **SUNDARARAMAN CHINTAMANI**

from the ARCHIVES

In the initial years, in addition to classical music, the Sabha arranged Harikatha Kalakshepams rendered by eminent vidwans. These discourses proved very popular among them the name of Sri Krishna Bhagavathar, Sri Panchapakakesa Sastriar, Sri Mangudi Chidambara Bhagavathar, and Sri Muthaiah Bhagavathar may be mentioned.



In 1905 the discourses of Rao Bahadur Prof. M. Rangachari on 'Srimad Bhagavad Geethai' was released in book form in Three Volumes.



In 1906, Pandit Madhan Mohan Malaviya delivered a lecture in the Sabha on Music and Education.

He was posthumously conferred with Bharat Ratna in the year 2015.

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

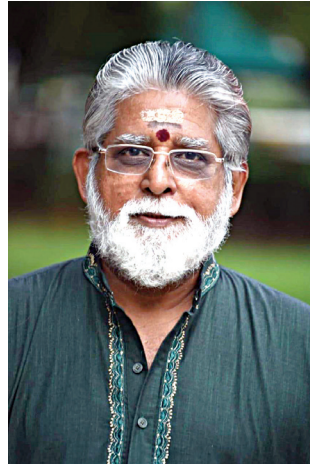
Palghat Mani Iyer Centenary Award : Thrissur Sri Narendran

Sri Narendran was born in the town of Kunnamkulam in Thrissur District in Kerala. He learnt mridangam at a very young age and his performance career started when he was just 9 years old. It was Sri David Bhagavatar of Kunnamkulam, who inspired him to pursue the art form then on. In his early years, he had the rare privilege of playing for stalwarts in Kerala such as Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar, Palghat Sri K. V. Narayanaswamy, Sri Pudukode Krishnamurthy and others at many venues across the state.

He moved to Chennai in the year 1973 and has been performing at the December Music Season continuously thereon. He is delighted to receive the prestigious Palghat Mani Iyer Centenary Award from Sri Parthasarathy Swami Sabha as he commences his 52nd year of performing at the Season. As with the legion of loyal rasikas, he is keenly looking forward to

performing at the Sabha.

Known as 'Kunnamkulam Narendran' in his early years, it was Sri Palghat KV Narayanaswamy who christened him as 'Thrissur Narendran' as he started performing for All India Radio in the early 1970s. He is fortunate to have had a long tutelage under Sri Palghat Raghu. It was his dream to master the art form and play like him. The biggest compliment to him is when musicians and rasikas identify some of his concert recordings as that of Sri Raghu's. His mantra is to keep playing like his guru, strongly adhering to his laya patantaram. He recalls with fondness the times when he had carried three mridangams of his master to concerts



at RR Sabha and other venues.

The trio of Sri Palghat Raghu, Sri K. V. Narayanaswami and Sri T. M. Thyagarajan has the biggest influence in his career and life. He dedicates his musical journey to them. Adhering to the sampradayam and patantaram of one's gurus, accompanying them to as many concerts one can in order to deeply internalise their playing style, the art

of playing for kritis to the role of silence to mastering the nuances of tani avartanam are his pointers for the young generation of mridangam vidwans.

... As told to **RAJAGOPALAN VENKATRAMAN**

Dr. MLV Award : Sri Kamalakiran Vinjamuri

Kamalakaran feels so blessed to be awarded with Dr. MLV Amma Award and states it is Super Special for multiple reasons as he hails from MLV Amma Parampara. His Guru Padmashree A Kanyakumari has accompanied MLV Amma since 1973 till her last concert. Kamalakiran is upholding the tradition by accompanying Padmabushan Dr. Sudha Raghunathan since 2016, who has instituted this award. Being chosen and recommended for this award is very close to his heart says this busy and regular flyer between the USA and India - Chennai

Kamalakaran's first performance was in 2006 when he was just 9 years old and in IV grade in USA. Very soon from 2010 he occupied the stage for December music season. While he recalls memory about his early stages, he expressed his heartfelt gratitude to SPSS sabha for the consistent opportunities offered to him including ALL SLOTS in the same year 2010-2011.

As this award adds a beautiful feather to his crown he is already being recognised by our Sabha in 2014 by awarding BEST VIOLINIST OF THE YEAR.

More than creating opportunities and identifying his potentials and awarding titles our SPSS Sabha is very emotionally close to his heart as the name signifies not only Parthasarathy Perumal but also his grand father Sri Parthasarathy who was his first Violin Guru. His passion continues by pursuing from his father Subhash Vinjamuri and Kanyakumari Amma. He visits Chennai every year and stays for a month to a year for learning from Kanyakumari Amma. He states happily that the next generation violinists including his disciples are on our stage.



He profusely thanked his Gurus, Sudhaji and our Sabha for choosing him for this special award and eagerly looking forward for many more years of association with everyone.

He congratulates Sri Sunil Gargan for receiving this same award along with him.

... As told to **SHARADHA VENKAT**

SANGEETH SARATHY ONLINE



All editions of Sangeeth Sarathy published this season are available at www.parthasarathyswamisabha.com

Isai Methai G. Ramanathan Award : Isai Mazhalai Sri Ramjhi

Q: Can you tell us about your first musical venture?

Ramjji: My journey began in the early 1970s with a Western music troupe called Frustrations Amalgamated. In 1976, I started a Tamil film music troupe named Abaswaram ("off-note") to stand out in a crowded field. To grab attention, we used unconventional tactics, such as distributing cotton buds and headache pills during shows. These stunts helped us gain recognition.

Q: How were these methods received?

Ramjji: Traditionalists were critical, but audiences appreciated our creativity and uncompromising quality. Eventually, our success won over even our critics, and we became a leading troupe.

Q: You later created the Isai Mazhalai program for children. Can you share more about it?

Ramjji: After years with the troupe, I wanted to innovate and create a platform exclusively for young singers. In 1999, we launched Isai Mazhalai after scouting talented children from schools and conducting rigorous rehearsals. Although I was initially apprehensive, the show was a resounding success, drawing full houses and later being televised for 14 weeks. Over time, we explored new formats with child artists, making the program a global sensation.

Q: How many artists did the initiative nurture?

Ramjji: Over two decades, Isai Mazhalai nurtured and trained around 240 professional musicians. Many have become Carnatic

vocalists, playback singers, composers, and instrumentalists. This initiative was a labor of love, but the pandemic eventually brought it to an end.



Q: Congratulations on the Isai Medhai G. Ramanathan award. How do you feel about this honor?

Ramjji: I'm deeply honored. Sri Parthasarathy Swami Sabha has been a constant supporter, offering platforms for our child artists and facilitating music classes at nominal fees in Triplicane. My connection with G. Ramanathan is especially meaningful. He was close to my parents, and as a child, I often visited his home and watched him rehearse. His legacy continues to inspire me.

Q: Are you satisfied with your musical journey?

Ramjji: Absolutely. At 76, I am proud of what we've achieved and the passion for music we've instilled in young artists.

Q: Thank you for your contributions to music, and congratulations once again.

Ramjji: Thank you. It has been a deeply fulfilling journey.

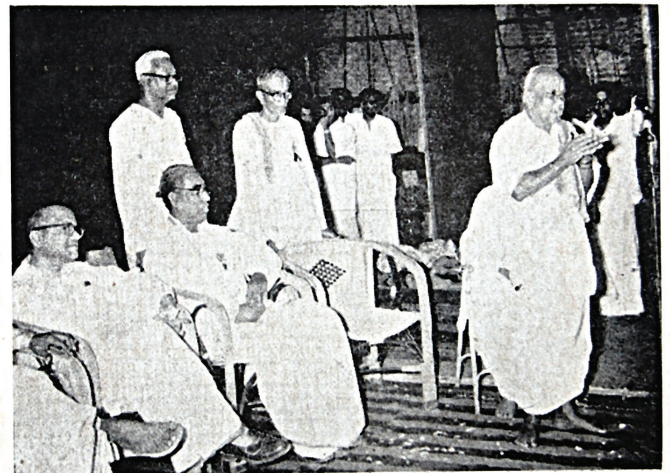
... Interview by **SUNDARARAMAN CHINTAMANI**

from the ARCHIVES



To mark the commencement of the Sabha's Centenary Year, a special concert was held on January 1, 2000. Sangita Pithamaha Semmangudi Dr. Srinivasa Iyer, at the remarkable age of 92, performed alongside Prof. T. N. Krishnan, Umayalpuram Dr. Umayalpuram Sivaraman, and Sri G. Harishankar. "The Hindu news paper reported "Today's performance and that too on the first day of the centenary year of the sabha, had to be written down in golden letters.

Sabha Diamond Jubilee—1960



Diamond Jubilee Celebrations, Inauguration Day.
Sri Ariyakudi's reply to the felicitations in completion of
50 years' service to Music.

Veena Pichumani Iyer Centenary Award: Veena Vidwan Sri D Balakrishna

Born to Smt Saradhamma and Veena Maestro Padmabhushan Mysore V Doraisamy Iyengar, Sangeetha Kala Ratna D Balakrishna who is taking forward the Mysore Baani feels it is his BHAGYAM (fortunate) to be conferred the legendary Veena Pitchumani Iyer Award during this Centenary Year.

He recalls how his father and his contemporary Sri Pitchmani Iyer were playing dignified music on the Veena without a pickup mic yet kept the audience spellbound.

Sri Balakrishna initially was a Mridangam player and has accompanied senior vidwans. With the constant encouragement given by his Grandfather and father he started performing Veena since 1973 at the age of 18. He shared how he regularly visited Chennai during the 1970s when there were only a handful of Sabhas. He was consecutively performing during the music academy mid year series. This All India Radios A TOP artist says that he is yet to be fortunate to perform in our prestigious Sabha where all maha vidwans have performed.

He expressed his heartfelt thanks to the Panel of SPSS Sabha and the students of Sri Pitchumani Iyer for recognising him and to receive this Honour under the banner of our Sabha as his BHAGYAM (Blessed). Sri Balakrishna, also a retired Banker says that the present generation is expected to learn any art from the Mothers womb. As he shares how difficult it is to get opportunity to perform with limited

slots for instrumental music, he thanked Mudra Sri Bhaskar, Mrs Radha Bhasker and Sri B Kannan for conducting Veena Mahotsavam staging as many Vainikas as possible year after year.

Even though he himself conducts programmes in his fathers memory and confers the title Vainika Brahma, he feels receiving this Award is a great honour for him.

He takes this opportunity to congratulate SPSS Sabha for its continuous services to the field of music and fine arts and upbringing innumerable artists to the



limelight. He wishes our Sabha to march forward and continue its journey in the forthcoming years too.

... As told to **SHARADHA VENKAT**

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● **Dushyanth Sridhar**

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● **Jayanthi Kumaresh & Anil Srinivasan**

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● **Priya Sisters**

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● **Neyveli Santhanagopalan**

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● **Palghat Ramprasad**

Curated by Sri K.N. Shashikiran





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