



Pantula Rama: carefully curated choices and planning

R BHARATHWAJ

Vidushi Pantula Rama presented a neat concert. She chose unique compositions and presented with sufficient grandeur.

For the first elaboration, Rama chose to present a detailed alapana of the rare ragam Sauveeram and followed it with 'Sarsa sauveera' of Muthuswami Dikshitar. This unique pratimadhyama asampoorna mela is known for its softness and grandeur was elaborated in detail. It also showcased the inherent pathos mood and the kriti was neatly presented. The alapana of Suddha danyasi was another elaborate affair with many intricate patterns and she explored the often untouched contours of the rAgam. Another Dikshitar kriti 'Sri Parthasarathina' was presented with an elaborate round of swarams and vidwas MSN Murthy on the violin showed a varied colour to all the ragams during his responses. The tone of his violin was very unique and his playing complimented the singing. The concert had earlier started with 'Yochana kamalalochana' in Darbar and Arunachala Kavi's 'Kanden kanden' in vasantha, that was followed with fireworks of kalpana swarams.

Thyagaraja's 'Palukavemi na deivama' (Purnachandrika) was presented in an apt pace. When Rama took up Begada for her ragam-tanam-pallavi, the stage was well set. She presented a very detailed raga alapana with many rare and intricate patterns and explored the complete spectrum of the rAgam with known and novel phrases. Murthy on the violin was equally good in his responses. A tanam they both shared was well built in stages. The pallavi which is a



creation of MSN Murthy himself was set to Khanda tripata in Khanda nadai, with sahitya 'Sakshi neerajakshi mamava Meenakshi karunarasakshi sarva loka.'. Rama presented a detailed neraval of the pallavi line and showed different kalapramanams. A detailed round of swarams was followed with ragamalika in sahana, hindolam, varali with swarms ending in the words that were taken from Dikshitar kritis to make the pallavi line. It was a detailed presentation and made full justice for an RTP. She followed it with a slokam in Sindhubhairavi, followed by an Annamacharya composition, 'Jaya jaya nrusimha,' also in Sindhubhairavi, set to tune by MSN Murthy.

Parupalli Phalgun on the mridangam played with much anticipation and showed his mastery in accompanying, as he accompanied each part of the concert. Harish Chandra on the kanjira, ably supported Phalgun throughout the concert. The Tani they shared in the rare talam, for the RTP was elaborate, well-structured and showed many intricate patterns and was much enjoyable.

Pantula Rama and her team presented a concert that was very appealing to the

rasikas present. Her stage presence was assured. She paid meticulous attention to sahitya pronunciation and diction. Overall, it was a wellreceived performance.



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Compiled by:
Sri K N Shashikiran

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Sri Parthasarathy Swami Sabha's 125th Year Isai Vizha inaugurated with a blend of devotion, luminous gathering of maestros and rasikas



SARADHA VENKATAKRISHNAN

The powerful and auspicious Mangala Isai filled the atmosphere in and around Vidya Bharathi Mandapam on Tuesday 16th December 2025 marking the Inauguration of 125th Year Isai Vizha - a significant milestone of the pioneer Sabha of Asia, Sri Parthasarathy Swami Sabha. Pazhayaseevaram G Kalidass and Vinod Kumar were welcoming everyone through their mesmerising Nadaswaram music along with G Silambarasan and Gummidipoondi R Jeeva who added liveliness through their Thavil support. As rightly mentioned by Vidwan K.N. Shashikiran 'avayil amarnthu irunda anaivarum arumayana vasippil mei maranthom.'

At this juncture His Holiness Srimad Paramahamsethyadhi Shri Madhurakavi Ramanuja Jeeyar Swamigal of Sri Vanamamalai mutt, Nanguneri arrived. He was welcomed according to the religious sampradayam. Once he adorned his asanam on stage, the sabha's President Nalli Kuppuswami Chettiar, Dr Nandini Azad (Chairman of Vidya Bharathi Trust), Cleveland V V Sundaram, Secretary M. Krishnamurthy and all awardees were invited on stage. The secretary, in his introductory speech recalled memories of the Sabha founded by Sri. Manni Tirumalachariyar and is the oldest in Asia that has seen five generations so far and would continue forever. He commenced with Guru Vandanam Srimathe Ramanujaya Namaha. He said that it was Shri U. Ve Mukkur Lakshmi Narasimhachariar who named the Sabha as 'Mahasabha.' This Mahasabha is conducting Isai Vizha this year in five different venues between 8th December 2025 to 11th January 2026, organising 316 concerts. About 1200 Musicians are staged in this Maha Utsavam, he said. He also made a special mention for K.N. Shashikiran, one of the key persons in organising the festival and a very special thanks to Shri Veeraraghavan for his efforts taken for having His Holiness Jeeyar among us.

Vidwan Neyveli Santhanagopalan's disciple Supriya Raja sang Margazhi Thingal. After the dignitaries lit the Kuthuvilakku, Nalli Chettiar welcomed the audience. In his speech, he said that Vanamamalai's 31st Jeeyar's presence during the 125th year celebration (1-1/4 Nootrandu) adds one more gem to the crown of the Sabha. He extended Suswagatham to his holy feet and



virtually welcomed Sangeetha Kalanidhi T K Murthy the eldest musician who is 102years old. Even though he couldn't make it to the function he congratulated all the awardees and blessed them. Chettiar declared that this year's Sangeetha Kalasarathy is conferred on the violinist Prof. V V Subrahmanyam and Harikatha exponent Visaka Hari. He congratulated all the awardees individually and expressed his happiness. He shared about 'Cleveland' Sundaram's in-depth knowledge in the music field and his contributions for upholding the rich traditions overseas, which makes him the apt person to felicitate the awardees. He said that Vidya Bharathi has become inevitable part of the sabha. He congratulated the Sabha's key persons M Krishnamurthy, R Vijayaraghavan, Bala, Veeraraghavan and others for their involvement and untiring contributions to the success of 125th year celebrations. He concluded his Presidential address with a thanking note to the Rasikas, Members and well-wishers of the Sabha.

Prof Sri V V Subrahmanyam and Smt. Vishakha Hari were conferred with Sangeetha Kalasarathy award, Vidushi Rama Ravi and Dr R K Padmanabha were conferred with Acharya Sarathy Award for their lifetime contributions. Vidwans T G Muthukumarasamy, V V S Murari, Nirmala Rajasekar, Mudikondan S N Ramesh, Mangalam Shankar, M Manoj Siva, B Ganapathy Raman, Vidya Kalyanaraman and Shruthi Shankar Kumar were honoured under various categories of awards. His Holiness Jeeyar while awarding the musicians gracefully read through the Birudhus and citations individually.

Following this, Certificates to the students who successfully completed the Diploma Course in Carnatic Music from Sri

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A bright Opening evening with N Ravikiran and S Shashank: Prodigies in Full Bloom

SIVAPRIYA KRISHNAN

The inaugural evening saw on stage two super talented, acclaimed Vidwans introduced to the world as child prodigies. Accompanied by two other greats on the percussion, complementing each other well.

Ravikiran is steeped in classicism and playfully employs a little fun in instrumentation. He is deeply laya oriented, but never compromises on melody. Shashank treads the classical path while also exploring with his flute.

After a brisk start with the Sankarabharanam ata tala varnam by Swati Tirunal, Malayamarutam raga alapana by Shashank kept up the tempo with 'Karpaga Manohara' that followed it. The RTP was in Simhendramadhyama, Adi Tala, 2 Kalai, eduppu after three counts, arudi karvai six counts. The Pallavi line 'Sada nee Padame Gati Madhava Madhusudhana,' a simple melodic structure, was reminiscent of Pallavis sung in older times. Ravikiran added some brilliant classical touches to the raga and intricate mathematical patterns to the Swara Kalpana.

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125th Year Isai Vizha inaugurated ...

Parthasarathy Swamy Sangeetha Vidyalaya, Chennai were presented. This year eight students received the Certificates from His Holiness Jeeyar. This course is recognised by the Department of Music, University of Madras and is a gateway to pursue higher studies in Carnatic Music.

The first issue of this year's Sangeetha Sarathy, the sabha's in-house newsletter, was released by His Holiness Jeeyar and received by Nalli Chettiar. The publication highlights all the lecture demonstrations and concerts presented during the Isai Vizha each December, put together by a committed group of writers. The secretary acknowledged the team comprising of R Revathi, S Sivakumar, V Mohan, Saradha Venkatakrishnan, R Bharathwaj, Rajagopalan Venkatraman, Sundararaman Chinthamani, Sivapriya Krishnan, Dr Chandrika Rajaram and M Fairy, for their consistent and dedicated work on the newsletter every year.

Cleveland V V Sundaram delivered an exceptional speech. He enriched the audience with lots of anecdotes and spoke about how various Sabhas are flourishing because of Chettiar's involvement and guidance and extended his heartfelt gratitude to Chettiar. He shared rare and interesting information about each and every awardee.

The awardees - Vishakha Hari, R K Padmanabha, VVS Murari and Nirmala Rajasekar, rendered their acceptance



Shashank matched Swara for Swara with dexterous speed. The concert concluded with 'Chandrasekhara Esha' in Sindubhairavi.

The percussionists were at their best. Patri Satish Kumar on the mridangam and Sree Sundar Kumar on the Khanjira had a Laya-tala debate between their respective instruments and a stiff one-on-one interplay, adding to the pomp and verve of the concert.

Overall, a show of wizardry and mastery over their respective instruments giving the necessary fillip to the mood of the festival, as the inaugural concert.



speech on behalf of all awardees. They dedicated their awards to their parents, gurus, rasikas, family and well-wishers thanking the sabha for bestowing the respective awards. K N Shashikiran

thanked all the recipients for gracefully accepting the Award.

His Holiness Jeeyar blessed everyone with his Anugraha Bashanam. He explained the connections among Ten Naadis, Ten Avatharams, Alwars and said because of Agathiar, Tamil language is elevated (தமிழுக்கு அகத்தியரால் ஏத்தம்). He spoke about our great Epics and Perumal. The inaugural function concluded with his blessing notes and the first concert of this year's Isai Vizha by vidwans 'Chitravina' N Ravikiran along with 'Flute' Shashank.

His career, marked by soulful renderings and perfect sensitivity to lyrics, shruti, and the pulse of the main artist, has set new standards for violin accompaniment -standards that continue to inspire students and vidwans across generations.

Lect- Demo: The Effective Use of Kalapramanam in Musical Expressions

by Rama Ravi and Suguna Varadachary

 **V MOHAN**

It was an interesting and illuminative Lecture Demonstration on 'The Effective Use of Kalapramanam in Musical Expressions' by Vidushis Rama Ravi and Suguna Varadachary, two erudite scholars of great repute, presenting their views, assisted by vocalists Dr Nanditha Ravi and Dr Aishwarya Shankar. Vidwan K. Arun Prakash supported on the mridangam.

Rama Ravi who opened the discussion, enlightened the listeners on some basic points about Kalapramanam. Termed also as kalam, it is nothing but the speed or tempo at which music is sung, be it composed music, such as, a krithi or manodharma music, such as, alapana. Kalapramanam is relative and not absolute, and no yard stick can be fixed for it, she said. It depends on and can be specific to the singer, based on factors, like comfort level and texture of voice. If two singers sing, both in slow tempo, the speeds may still vary. In Carnatic music, generally three kinds of tempos are in vogue - slow, medium and fast, commonly known as , Chouka, Madhyama and Dhurita kalams. Rama emphasised the importance of imparting the knowledge of kalapramanam to students, from the time Abyasa Ganam - Sarali and Jendai varisais are taught. Mastering speed control is essential in music, and training for it must begin early. In Carnatic music, the idea of *kalapramanam* becomes especially important when singing Varnams. Rasikas of Carnatic music would be familiar with Varnams commonly rendered in two speeds. Nanditha demonstrated speed variation in Varnams by singing the Varnam 'Eranapai' in Thodi in different speeds. Rama noted that singers may use different kinds of speed variations in this Varnam, depending on their individual capability. Turning to krithis, Rama dealt with the concept of kalapramanam more elaborately.

She explained that kalapramanam cannot be applied mechanically; it must suit the raga's structure, the lyrics, and the composition's mood. Even within Thodi, Thyagaraja's Koluvamaregatha works best in madhyama kalam, while Subbaraya Sastri's Nannu Brochutaku, with its long karvais, requires a slower tempo to bring out its pleading sahitya bhavam effectively.

Nanditha demonstrated how these krithis gain depth when sung with the appropriate kalapramanam, rather than in arbitrary tempos. Rama further illustrated this by contrasting Dikshitar's Sankaracharyam in Sankarabharanam, which suits a slow tempo, with Thyagaraja's Ethuda Nilichithe in the same raga, which demands a faster pace to reflect its sahitya bhavam.

Continuing the discussion, Suguna turned to the 'manodharma' aspect of music and said that in alapana, an important component of 'manodharma' too, tempo plays a vital role. For scalar ragas like Hamsanadham or Amrithavarshini, madhyama kalam would be better, as these ragas do not have much of a swarupa or character, except by dependence on the Arohanam and Avarohanam. Ragas like Sankarabharanam can be sung in both slow and fast tempos, offering ample scope to dwell on or elongate individual swaras. She noted that this is why Arabhi and Devagandhari—though they share the same scale—sound so different: their distinct flavour comes from tempo, with



Devagandhari defined by its characteristically slow pace.

The same is the case with the pairs, Durbar and Nayaki or Mukhari and Salagabhairavi, though the scales are the same, it is the tempo which lends the varying flavours. To demonstrate how tempo plays a vital role in bringing out the bhavam of a raga well, Suguna sang phrases from 'Ranganayakam' and 'Nee Bhajana Gana', in Nayaki as well as 'Padavinee' in Salagabhairavi and 'Saraseeruhanana and 'Entha Ninne' in Mukhari. The kritis of Thyagaraja and Syama sastri are in conversational mood with a Sahitya Bhavam, whereas Dikshitar's are descriptive, where the correct Raga bhavam is essential, since there is no bhavam for the sahityam. Suguna made some more illustrative singing to show how the bhavam of different ragas can be brought out appropriately.

Speaking about rendering of 'thanam,' Suguna said that madhyama kalam suits thanam better. Aishwarya sang 'thanam' in Keeravani. Rama added that in thanam can be played in a fast tempo on instruments, but gamakams (nuances) will take a beat.

Suguna said that niraval is the best form of manodharma music. Usually, niraval can be sung in the same tempo as the krithi. She sang niraval for the line, 'Veda Sastra Tatvarthamu' in the krithi, 'Enduku Peddalavale.' Suguna opined that madhyama kalam suits niraval better.

Rama talked about mixed tempos in some krithis. Selected phrases from 'Bhajana Seyave' in Kalyani and 'Nee Pada Pankajamula' in Begada, to name a few were sung by way of Illustration. Rama also touched on the kalapramanam appropriate for Padams and Javalis. Slow tempo suits Padams better, whereas Javalis are more brisk, she said. The Padam 'Rama Rama Prana Sakhi' and 'Ela Radayane,' a Javali, both in Bhairavi, were sung. Phrases from some other Javalis and Padams were also sung.

Rama explained that while a composition can technically be sung in a different kalapramanam, its bhavam and finer nuances may suffer, diminishing its beauty. To a question whether thalam plays a role in kalapramanam, Rama said, a krithi in Kanda Chapu, if sung in a slow tempo, will not sound good citing, 'Marivere Dikkavaru' in Lathangi as example.

Rama and Suguna, belonging to two different schools - Brinda (Dhanammal) and Musiri respectively - joined hands synergistically, to render a highly educative and absorbing discussion. Rama's daughter and disciple Dr. Nanditha Ravi and Dr. Suguna's disciple Aishwarya Shankar added a lot of value to the programme by demonstrating the concepts with their pleasing, spontaneous and skilful singing. The role for Arun Prakash, a mridangist of high repute, was quite minimal in this programme, but where warranted, he added beauty to the singing.



Madhuri Kaushik, a disciple of the renowned duo Ranjani - Gayatri, presented a poised and energetic concert that reflected her strong training and musical sensitivity. She was ably supported by Krithik Koushik on the violin, whose melodic responses added depth and colour, and by Nandan Kashyap on the mridangam, offering steady rhythm and wonderful support throughout.

Together, the trio created a warm, cohesive atmosphere, bringing balance and charm to every piece they presented. Their combined artistry made for an enjoyable and memorable musical experience for the audience.



Madhuri's Guru Ranjani interacts with the team of artists after the concert



Sunil Gargyan presented an engaging concert, supported with sensitivity and finesse by HN Bhaskar on the violin, Sai Raghavan on the mridangam, and S Krishna on the ghatam.

He opened with *Gopalaka Pahimam* in Revagupti, setting a serene tone, followed by a graceful *Budhamāśrayāmi* in Natakurinji. The weighty *Seshachalanayakam* in Varali and the lively *Srirama Jayarama* of

Tyagaraja added depth and contrast to the early part of the recital.

The centrepiece of the evening was an expansive RTP in Kharaharapriya, set to Khanda Jhampa with a Dvinadai structure—chatushrām in the first half and khanda in the second. The concert concluded with *Ksheera Sagara* in Rageshri, a melodic finish to a wellbalanced performance.



The Akkarai Sisters, S. Subhalakshmi and S. Sornalatha, presented a vocal concert filled with depth and effortless musical chemistry, supported by Tumkur Bargav on the violin, Shree Sundar Kumar on the mridangam, and B.S. Purushotham on the kanjira. The evening opened with the grandeur of Dikshitar's *Sri Maha Ganapatiravatu Mam* in Gowla and another Dikshitar's fine kriti *Hiranmayim Lakshmi* in Lalitha, enriched with engaging storytelling about the context and inspiration behind the composition was a delight. A serene *Chalamelara Saketharama* in Margahindolam added a gentle contrast.

The highlight of the concert was an exceptional RTP in Hamsanandi. The sisters' alapana, touched with Hindustani hues, created an immersive soundscape. The thani avartanam was particularly striking, with Sornalatha weaving konnakkol syllables into the vibrant exchanges of Shree Sundar Kumar and Purushotham. The collective vidwat of artists on stage was unmistakable, making the performance a memorable and elevating experience for the audience.

Lect-demo by the Malladi Brothers - Sangeetha Shastra Margamu through Tyagaraja Kritis

 **RAJAGOPALAN VENKATRAMAN**
(with inputs from ARVIND IYER)

The Malladi Brothers - Vidwans Malladi Sreeramprasad and Malladi Ravikumar - presented a deeply engaging lecture demonstration on 'Sangeetha Shastra Margamu through Tyagaraja Kritis,' offering profound insights into how Sri Tyagaraja seamlessly united musical science, spiritual discipline and ethical living through his compositions. Sishya Sandilya (Washington) provided tambura accompaniment.

The session opened with 'Rama Bhakti Samrajya,' immediately establishing Tyagaraja's vision of music as upāsana, not performance. The Brothers explained that for Tyagaraja, music was antar yajñam - an inward spiritual sacrifice. Referring to the three scriptural ṛṇas—Deva, Rishi, and Pitru—they posed a moving question: "Can we ever repay our debt to Tyagaraja, who gave so much to humanity? Can we even live one day the way he lived?"

Drawing parallels with Sadasiva Brahmendra, revered as a Nāda Yogi and Jīvanmukta, they emphasised that Tyagaraja practised Akṣara Upāsana, Anāhata Nāda Upāsana, and Nāda Brahma Sādhana, seeing music as the path to liberation. His compositions embody the Śhaḍvida Mārga—Stuti, Nīti, Rīti, Śaraṇāgati, Yukti, and Mukti. Importantly, Tyagaraja never criticized others; his kritis were instruments of self-introspection. This was illustrated through 'Svararāga Sudhā' and 'Svararāga Vādararayya,' where he condemns empty speech and ego, affirming that only Rāma Bhakti bestows true wisdom.

A key segment addressed the disconnect between meaning and performance in contemporary concerts. Using 'Endukku Peddala' as an example, the Brothers noted that while musicians enthusiastically render neraval and kalpanaswaras, they often overlook Tyagaraja's meditation on Nāda Vidyā Marmam. They observed pointedly that true comprehension might make one hesitate to sing the kriti casually. Similarly, 'Nērāruncināru' (Mālavī), frequently treated as a fast-paced filler, was shown to demand vilambita kāla, restraint and deep bhāva rather than speed and ornamental excess. Bhāva, they emphasised, lies beyond rāga and tāla.

Affirming that Tyagaraja's kritis are imperishable tonal treasures, they sang 'Bhajare Mānasa Tyāgarāja Gurum' (Kambhoji) of Peddanti Suryanarayana. Describing Tyagaraja as a Puṇya Puruṣa, they likened his Telugu verses to Tirukkural-like aphorisms—simple yet philosophically profound. Music sung without bhakti, they said, is like salt mistaken for camphor: similar in appearance, vastly different in essence.

Highlighting Tyagaraja as poet, philosopher, saint and composer, they spoke of the three great Telugu Bhakti 'Rājas'—Pothana, Gopanna and Tyagaraja—declaring Tyagaraja the true sovereign of jñāna, bhakti, saṅgīta and sāhitya. For him,



the saptasvaras were devatās, as illustrated through 'Śobillu Saptasvara' and the line 'Saṅgīta Śāstra Jñānamu.'

The importance of saḥitya śuddham was reinforced through gentle humour, recalling a student's mispronunciation that completely altered meaning. Sacred mantras such as the Gāyatrī and Lalitā Rahasya, they cautioned, are meant for antarmukha sādhana, not casual display. Their succinct advice resonated strongly: "Learn music as a science; practise it as an art."

Through kritis such as 'Nādatanu Maniśam,' Śrīpāpriya Saṅgītōpāsana' (Aṭāna), 'Raṅjimpajēse' (Devagāndhārī), 'Śrī Nārada Muni' (Bhairavi), and 'Svararāga Sudhā,' the Brothers revealed Tyagaraja's worship of Śabda Brahman and his reverence for Sage Nārada. They stressed that paramānanda cannot be attained through rhythmic exuberance or technical display alone; bhajans without bhakti are hollow.

The Varāli kriti 'Karunā Yēlagantē' was presented as an upadeśa, echoing Kanchi Paramacharya's description of Tyagaraja's works as 'Tyāgopaniśads.' In 'Kaddanuvāriki,' they reminded musicians that śuddha manasu and suśvaramu must go together. Recalling their gurus Pinakapani garu and Nedunuri Krishnamurthy garu, they spoke of singing infused with emotional truth.

The lec-dem concluded with a call to eschew irrelevant neraval and to contemplate meaning before manodharma. Kritis like 'Manasā Yetulō' and 'Nāmakusumamula' reaffirmed the central message: human birth finds fulfilment through Rāma Nāma. More than an academic exposition, the Malladi Brothers' presentation was a call to introspection, reminding listeners that Tyagaraja's kritis are living spiritual texts, meant to transform both musician and rasika alike.

You are welcome to write for Sangeetha Sarathy!

Are you attending concerts at Sri Parthasarathy Swami Sabha this season? You too can write for Sangeetha Sarathy! Students of music and rasikas with good writing skills are invited to write.

If interested, mail to sangeethasarathy@gmail.com with details about your interest in music and writing.

Prince Rama Varma's Concert of Hidden Treasures

SARADHA VENKATAKRISHNAN

Prince Rama Varma's concert started with Bhairavi ata tala varnam of Pachimiriyam Adiyappayya and concluded with vidwam M Balamuralikrishna's Tillana in Kuntalavarali. In between were Hamsadhwani, Kapi, Balahamsa, Panthuvrali, Karaharapriya and a Raagamalika. He brought out some of the hidden treasures and explained the situations and significance of the compositions that made his concert presentation very interesting.

The purvagam of the Ata tala Varnam was sung in three columns whereas 'Vaatapi Ganapathim' kriti was enacted with bhava. Kalpanaswarams by both Rama Varma and Avaneeswaram Vinu on the violin were vibrant. Next number was Kapi. The kriti was composed by his spiritual guide (manaseka guru) M. D. Ramanathan. The song 'Nandagopa Yesoda thanaya' in misra chapu has a significance. Both MDR and his guru Tiger Varadachariar adopted a child each on Krishna's birthday and it was purely a coincidence. To mark this occasion, MDR composed this song. Another hilarious coincidence was of Kapi that was being served on stage while he was speaking about Kapi raagam!

Rama Varma's guru Dr M Balamuralikrishna's masterpiece 'Dandamu bettedanura kodandapani cudara' by Thyagaraja in Balahamsa was classic. Avaneeswaram Vinu on the violin, B Harikumar on the Mridangam and Dr S. Karthick on the Gatam formed a core team captivating the audience. Their seamless coordination elevated the mood of the concert and energized



the audience too.

Kamavardhini (Pantuvrali) raga prastaram, magical interplay between the four artists, mirroring each other's phrases were well understood and enjoyed by the audience. In 'Sarasaksha', a composition of Swati Tirunal, all four were alert and in sync with the timeline especially during the swara prastharam in the phrase 'bhimasevyatama.' Harikumar and Karthick who were supporting throughout energetically enhanced further during Tani avartanam. Karthick's solkattu eased the audience to understand and appreciate the complexity of Tani avartanam.

Further to this, another interesting Telugu song 'Chanda mamanu chuchi vaddama' in Karaharapriya by Kaiwara Amara Narayana (who has also composed in mani pravalam) with an interesting note. Rama Varma said that he received a request from a rasika to sing this song whereas this song is to be sung on a full-moon day and we are around the new-moon day. So, Prince decided to bring the moon to Parthasarathy Swami sabha exclusively, through this song!

Vivek Moozhikulam - Chasing clouds and dreams

SARADHA VENKATAKRISHNAN

Vivek commenced his concert with a soothing Hindustani Behag Varnam 'Vanajaksha ninne nammiti' composed by Prof. T R Subramaniam, set to Adi talam by Pro. This was followed by Mayamalavagoula 'Meru samana' by Thyagaraja set in Desathi Talam. The kriti was sung after a glimpse of raga alapana. 'Galamuna shobillu kanaka bhushanamula' was taken for Niraval and kalpanaswaram.

'Palaya madhava mam anisham' by Swathi Thirunaal in Asaveri was well sung and supported by Vignesh Thyagarajan on the violin, equally well. Both of them cushioned one another in the next number which is Vivek's submain - Kannada. Raga alapana of this vakra raaga was rendered with ease by both youngsters. 'Shri Matrubbhutham' in Misrachapu by Muthuswamy Dikshitar was well sung with kalpanaswaram in 'Sadasivam paramasivam.' Thyagaraja's swift Sarangaa raga kriti in jampa talam - 'Neevadane gana' set the mood for the main number Hemavathi. Vivek and Vignesh weaved the raga very well with a good understanding.



Vivek was assertive in his approach. His perseverance ended up in perfection, both in gamakas or sangathis. Dikshitar's 'Sri kanthimatim' lingered in everyone's ears even after the rendition. Kalpanaswarams were well sung in three eduppus - shukashaunakadi, sankhadyashtottara and Sri kanthimatim.

Burra Sriram on the mridangam and Sowmiya Narayanan on the Ghatam extended good support and exhibited their expertise during the Tani avartanam. Vivek concluded his concert with Papanasam Sivan's 'Karpagame kann paarai' in Madhyamavathi. With Karpagambal's 'kadai kan paarvai,' this young talent will soar high soon.

Vidya Kalyanaraman's Musical Offering to Hanuman

ANURADHA SHANKARAN

Vidya Kalyanaraman began the concert with the opening slokam of Subramanya bhujangam 'Sada Baala roopapi' as a virutham on lord Ganesha - in Naatai followed by a crisp 'Jagadananda karaka' in Naatai, the first of the five Ghana Raga pancharathnams composed by Sri Thyagaraja.

After the first song, she announced that she would be presenting a concert dedicated to Sri Hanuman as it was Hanumath Jayanthi. She said that she chose to begin the concert with 'Jagadananda karaka', as Sri Thyagaraja mentions the 108 names of Sri Rama in the composition and Hanuman would come to a place if and only the nama of Rama is chanted there.

She sang one of the Rama nataka krithis of Sri Arunachala kavirayar - 'Hanumane saamikkindha' in the raga Malayamarutham, in which Sita Devi narrates a few incidents that took place in their lives to Hanuman and asks him to describe her situation in Lanka to Sri Rama. The Malayamarutham flowed like a beautiful river in the voice of Vidya. She presented lovely kalpana swarams for the line 'Hanumane samikkindha.'

Next came the raga alapana of Dharmavathi. The song was a composition of Sri Annamacharya - 'Mangambudhi Hanumantha' composed on the deity Hanuman at the Mangambudhi temple in Andhra. She presented a beautiful Kalpanaswaram for this krithi too. The next song of the evening was a composition of Sri Muthuswami Dikshitar 'Veera Hanumathe namo namah' in the raga Kanada set to Roopaka thalam. This was followed by a brisk Vasantha raga krithi 'Kanden kanden,' another Rama nataka keerthanai by Arunachala kavirayar.

The main piece of the evening was Saveri. Vidya presented a beautiful raga alapana in her mellifluous voice. Vidwan V V Srinivasa Rao played an equally melodious alapana on the violin.



The song was 'Anjaneya Raghurama dhootha' a composition of Maharaja Swati Tirunal. She sang the neraval on the lines, 'Janaka sutadi vimochana lola jambumali khalanishikhara kala.' In this line, Maharaja Swati Tirunal describes the greatness of Sri Hanuman as "You destroyed the sorrows of Sita the daughter of Janaka just like you destroyed the demons like Jambumali". Vidya presented a very pleasing neraval and sang kalpana swaras. She took the famous swara pattern of 'Bhavayami Raghuramam' and used that at the end of every swara phrase she sang which was widely enjoyed by the rasikas.

Vidwans Arjun Ganesh on the mridangam and Trichy Murali on the ghatam played a brilliant thani avarthanam.

Vidya then sang the verse 'Anjile ondu petran' from Kamba Ramayanam in Revathi, Sindhubhairavi, Bhageshri and Madhuvanathi. The song was 'Anumanai anudhinamum ninai maname' a composition of Guru Surajanandha tuned in the same four ragas in the reverse order starting from Madhuvanathi and ending in Revathi. The finale of the concert was 'Rama Bhaktha Hanuman' in Jhonpuri composed by Smt Suguna Purushothaman.

All the artists on the stage complimented each other and presented a very soulful and melodious concert. A beautiful start for the 12 days series 'Samskriti Utsav' by Sri Parthasarathi Swamy Sabha at Sanskrit college, Mylapore.



Jayashree Vaidyanathan presented a poised and engaging concert, marked by her seasoned artistry and unhurried confidence. A vocalist known for her no-frills, neat approach, she allowed the music to speak for itself, choosing kritis with thoughtful care and presenting them with clarity and depth. Her manodharma was measured yet expressive, reflecting years of experience and a refined aesthetic sense. She was ably supported by Thirumarugal Dinesh on the violin, whose sensitive replies enhanced the melodic flow. Manikudi Chandrasekar on the mridangam provided steady, unobtrusive rhythmic support, while H. Sivaramakrishnan on the ghatam added subtle texture. The team created a cohesive, dignified musical experience that highlighted Jayashree's mature musicianship.

Shertallay K N Renganatha Sharma – Melodious and mesmerising Music

SARADHA VENKATAKRISHNAN

Ponniah Pillai's 'Mayatita swarupini' in Mayamalavagowla was the curtain raiser for the evening by Renganatha Sharma in his silky tone. Thereafter, an array of songs in Asaveri, Nattakurinji, Malayamarutham, Kosalam, Boopalam, Bhairavi, a Meera bhajan and khamas thillana came by steadily in a measured pace. Thyagaraja's 'Rara ma inti daga' was followed by the evening raga Nattakurinji. Both Sharma and Embar Kannan rendered soothing alapana and promptly choose Dikshitar's vara kriti 'Budham ashrayami' in jampa thaalam as it was Wednesday. Before the vivadi raaga was the 'karpaga manohara kaatharul kripakara' in khanta chapu by Papanasam Sivan. This malayamarutham kriti was followed by a thoughtfully constructed kalpanaswaram segment with beautiful jantai and dattu prayogams.

Koteeswara iyer's 'Kas guha shanmuga neeye gathi' in 71st mela karta raga - Kosalam set to roopaka thaalam was a delight to the rasikas. This vivadi raagam was sung with sophisticated harmony and the kalpanaswarams flew effortlessly. Embar Kannan's violin was matchless, innovative and unique. Swathi Thirunaals 'Gopalaka pahimam anisham' in Boopalam was a beautiful rendition before the main masterpiece Bhairavi.



Rich resonance, in-depth knowledge, moderate voice tone are some of the value additions in Sharma's singing. The melancholic bhaava of the queen of raaga Bhairavi was very well brought out both by Renganatha Sharma and Embar Kannan. It was indeed highly educative for the listeners. Thyagaraja's 'Upachaaramulanu chekonavayya' received all possible upacharams from the quartet. The phrase 'Kapata nataka suthradhari' was taken up for the neraval, which was the gateway for thani avartanam.

Steady and unobtrusive rhythm by Tanjavur Murugaboopathy on the mridangam and H Sivaramakrishnan on the ghatam was very relaxed and closely aligned with the music and the musicians. It was a pleasure witnessing their performance.

Meera bhajan 'Baso more nainan mein nandalal' and Lalgudi Jayaraman's Khamas thillana brought the curtain down for the evening amidst a huge round of applause.

Dhanya Dinesh Rudrapatnam, a young and promising Carnatic vocalist, trained under Vid. Delhi P. Sunderrajan and Vid. Neyveli R. Santhanagopalan. Her music reflects the depth, discipline and classicism of her esteemed gurus, while carrying her own emerging artistic voice. Accompanying her for this performance were three talented musicians: M. Siva Teja on the violin, known for his sensitive support and melodic clarity; Suriya Nambisan on the mridangam, bringing rhythmic precision and energy; and G. Ganapathy on the ghatam, adding rich tonal texture. Together, they created a vibrant and engaging concert experience.



Abilash Giriprasad offered a sincere and a beautiful concert, supported by a vibrant team of accompanists: Dr Keerthana Sankar on the violin, B. S. Prashanth on the mridangam, M. Phanindra on the ghatam and Bhagyalakshmi Krishna on the morsing. From the very first Nata raga kriti, the performance felt assured, setting a lively tone that carried

through the evening. Abilash's singing was rooted firmly in tradition, his phrases unfolding with ease and a clear sense of classicism. Keerthana's violin responses were in tune with his musical ideas. The percussionists worked beautifully as a unit, adding colour and energy without ever overshadowing the melody. Their gentle rhythmic dialogue enriched the concert's flow. The concert was a traditional presentation delivered with sincerity.



Understanding Rare Ragas of Dikshitar from His Kritis: A Lecture-Demonstration by Sriram Parasuram

 **SUNDARARAMAN CHINTAMANI**

On 17 December, Vidwan Sriram Parasuram presented a scholarly and musically absorbing lecture-demonstration titled 'Understanding Rare Ragas of Dikshitar from His Kritis' at Sri Parthasarathy Swami Sabha. The session examined eight rare ragas as revealed through the kritis of Muthuswami Dikshitar, illustrating how the composer embedded complete raga lakshana within his compositions.

Parasuram emphasised that Dikshitar's rare ragas must be understood only through the kritis themselves, as many of these ragas lack extensive independent manodharma traditions.

Ragachudamani

The session opened with 'Sveta Ganapatim' in Ragachudamani, often described as the "crest jewel among ragas." The kriti contains the raga mudra and is marked by characteristic vakra prayogas. Parasuram noted that the raga is also known as Ragavardhini or Vishnupriya. He learnt this composition from Prof. S.R. Janakiraman, who interpreted it directly from the Sangita Sampradaya Pradarshini (SSP). The rendition demonstrated how Dikshitar uses carefully placed phrases to firmly establish raga identity.

Navaraj

Parasuram next presented 'Hasti Vadanaya' in Navaraj, a raga whose structure is almost entirely revealed through the kriti itself. The composition includes the raga mudra and, as per Subbarama Dikshitar, is ideally sung in madhyama shruti, being a panchamantya raga. Parasuram observed that Navaraj demands prolonged and patient treatment, with its character emerging through subtle prayogas rather than overt phrases. He also pointed out its proximity to Kuriinji, while underlining its distinct individuality.

Kusumakara

The raga Kusumakara was illustrated through 'Kusumakara Shobhita Shri Pura Geham.' Parasuram explained that while the poorvanga bears resemblance to Saranga, the raga possesses significant vivaditvam. Dikshitar, he noted, teaches this raga entirely through the kriti. Elements such as varjya, vakra and dhatu prayogas collectively lend Kusumakara its unique personality.

Ramakali

Ramakali was highlighted as an example of Dikshitar's sophisticated handling of vivadi swaras. Parasuram clarified the apparent ambiguity surrounding the raga: though classified under the 15th melakarta varga of Malavagowla with shuddha madhyama, Subbarama Dikshitar specifies the use of prati madhyama. He demonstrated the raga through 'Rama Rama Kali Kalusha,' drawing attention to its strong emphasis on gandhara and signature phrases such as *dha-pa-ma-ga*. He also carefully differentiated Ramakali from Saveri, which it is often mistaken for.

Thanukeerthi

Corresponding to the traditional Tanarupi, Thanukeerthi was demonstrated through 'Chidambara Nataraja Murthim.' Although the kriti is concise, Parasuram showed how it encapsulates the complete raga framework, illustrating Dikshitar's ability to convey raga essence with remarkable economy.

Sthavarajam

An audava-audava raga, Sthavarajam was presented through 'Stavarajadhi Nuta Bruha Dheera.' Parasuram demonstrated how Dikshitar establishes raga identity using limited swaras, relying on carefully structured phrases rather than expansive melodic development.

Ghanta

Described as a prachina raga, Ghanta occupies a special place in the session. Parasuram referred to theories suggesting

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Understanding Rare Ragas of Dikshitar from His Kritis: A Lecture-Demonstration by Sriram Parasuram

that ragas such as Todi, Ahiri, Dhanyasi, Bhairavi, and Reetigowla may have evolved from Ghanta, making it a kind of composite or super-set raga. To explain this concept, he offered a striking analogy from petroleum refining, likening Ghanta to crude oil from which various refined products emerge at different stages. A navavarana kriti in Ghanta further underscores its antiquity and depth.

Dhavalangam / Dhavalambari

The lecture concluded with Dhavalangam (Dhavalambari), demonstrated through 'Shringaradi Navarasangi.' Parasuram emphasised that the raga is inseparable from the sonic texture of specific syllables, particularly the phrase "nga." He stressed that appreciating this raga requires attentiveness not only to melodic movement but also to the sound and meaning of the sahitya.

Concluding Observations



Parasuram reiterated that in Dikshitar's rare ragas, the kritis themselves are complete musical statements. The aroha-avaroha, raga personality, and aesthetic intent must all be derived from the composition. When a kriti fully defines a raga, he concluded, any additional material becomes unnecessary—a testament to Dikshitar's extraordinary compositional mastery.



Nisha Rajagopalan presented a beautifully crafted concert that showcased her sensitivity and strong grounding in music. Her kriti selection drew from a wide range of composers, giving the recital both variety and balance. The opening 'Pavanathmaja' in Nattai set a bright tone, followed by soulful renditions such as Gopalakrishna Bharathi's 'Adiya Pada Darisanam' and Mysore Vasudevacharya's 'Ninne Nammithinayya' in Simhendramadhyamam. The gentle 'Amba Neelambari' and Papanasam Sivan's composition 'Nambi kettavar evarayya' in Hindolam added emotional tone. The highlight of the evening was a majestic and melodious Kedaragowlai, with Thyagaraja's 'Tulasi Bilva' rendered with poise and depth. Nisha also wove in lines from the Hanuman Chalisa for Hanumath Jayanthi, adding a thoughtful devotional touch.

H. N. Bhaskar's violin accompaniment was equally brilliant, mirroring her ideas with finesse. The tani avartanam by J. Vaidyanathan and Sunil Kumar was a sparkling exchange between two seasoned artists. Overall, it was a well-architected concert that blended classicism, variety and heartfelt expression.



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S. Aishwarya and S. Saundarya, great-granddaughters of the legendary M. S. Subbulakshmi, presented a bright vocal duet steeped in tradition that carried forward their illustrious musical lineage with grace. They were supported by a young and promising team: Parur M. K. Ananthalakshi on the violin, Sunaada Krishna on the mridangam, and Ramya Ramesh on the ghatam. The sisters' neat, clear diction stood out throughout the concert, lending each kriti a sense of intention. Their music showed no compromise on melody or intricacy, balancing classicism with youthful freshness. The accompanying artists' sensitive support made the performance both engaging and reassuringly traditional.



Sriya Srinivas and Sreeja Srinivas, performing as the Sri Sri Sisters, brought youthful energy and charm to their vocal duet. Supported by Sindu Rageswari on the violin and Navaneet Gopinath on the mridangam, the young team delivered a concert that was vibrant, enthusiastic and true to their age. Their renditions were short, crisp, and confidently presented, reflecting careful preparation and a sincere desire to give their best. Sindu's melodic support and Navaneet's steady rhythmic presence added balance and colour, allowing the sisters' voices to shine. The performance left a pleasant impression of promise.

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Udayalur Kalyanarama Bhagavathar's namasankeerthanam is always an uplifting experience, filled with devotion, energy and his signature classical melody. With his resonant voice and effortless command over music, he led the audience through soulful bhajans and lively namavalis that created an atmosphere of collective joy. The seamless blend of melody, rhythm and spiritual fervour kept listeners fully engaged. It was a vibrant session that reaffirmed the timeless power of nama sankeertanam.

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