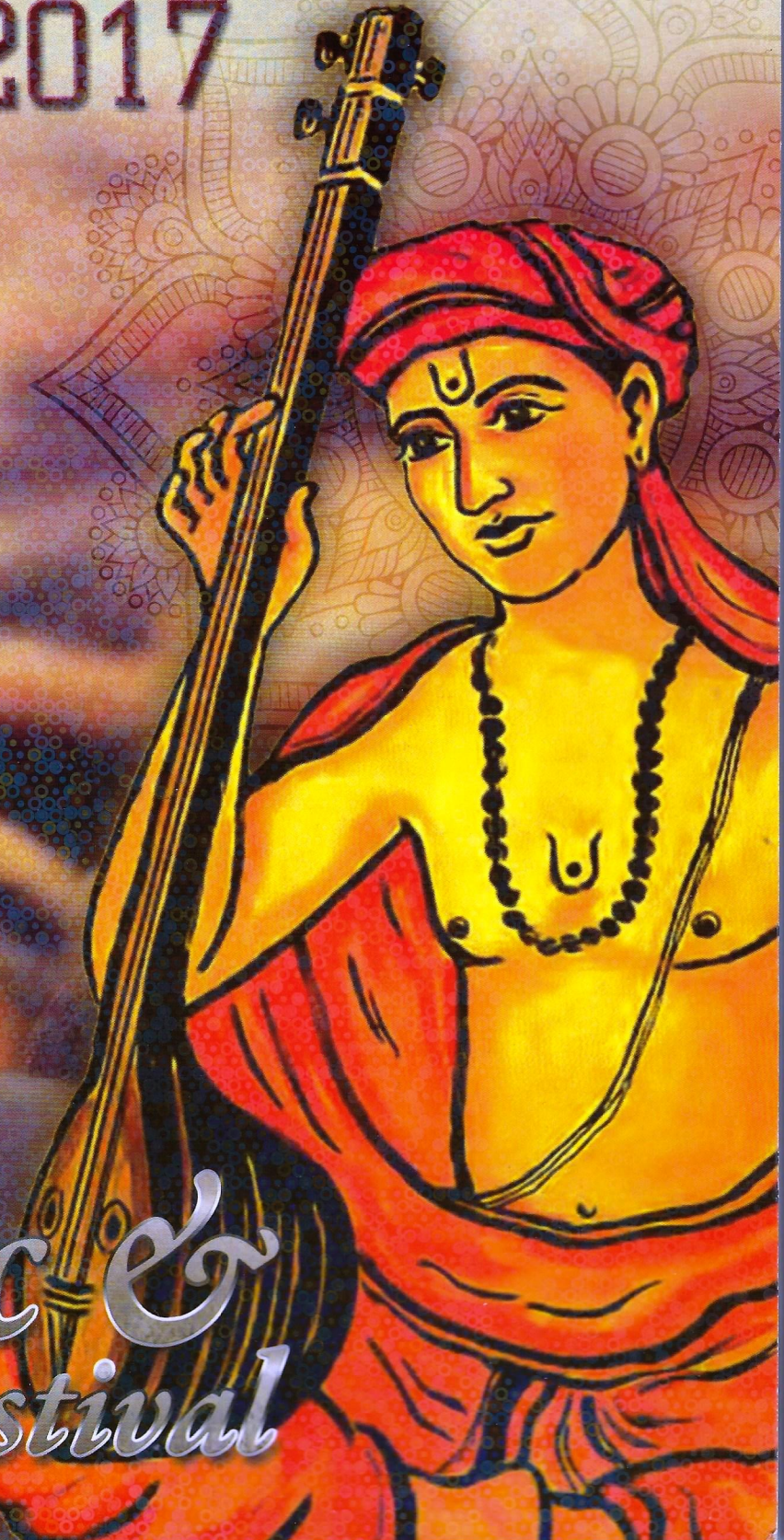


IFAASD

Souvenir 2017

10th
YEAR

Indian
Music &
Dance Festival



The Immortal Saint Tyāgarāja

The Carnatic music world of aficionados and musicians, especially those who have made Carnatic music as their mainstay or career, should forever be grateful that their success, if not their wellbeing, is primarily due to Tyāgarāja and his immortal compositions. As we celebrate the 250th Jayanti of the immortal saint, Tyāgarāja, let us step back and look at how this *phenomenon* happened over the last two centuries.

From almost the beginning of the 20th century, quite a few books in Tamil, Telugu, English, and to a limited extent, in other Indian languages have been published on Tyāgarāja; but, unfortunately, none of these books provide a reliable biography of the saint. Hagiologists attempted to make up his biography, by citing miracles, legends, unverified anecdotes and hearsay, and even injecting some mysticism. Such attempts have only grown exponentially over the last 100 years as published material, many of which contradict important data including the authorship of some compositions attributed to Tyāgarāja. However, dedicated scholars under the guidance of great Achāryās such as Kānchi Paramāchārya (HH ChandraSekharendra Saraswati), have gleaned many a detail of his life from his own kritis (songs) and musical plays and carefully knitted the life history with the help of manuscripts made available by the families of Tyāgarāja's direct disciples.

CARNATIC MUSIC from 1600 ~1780 CE:

Let us look at the Carnatic Music *scene* at the time of Tyāgarāja's birth. During the period between the middle of the 17th century and through the 18th century (CE) *manOdharma sangItam* peaked; several stars such as *Thodi SeetArāmaiya, ATāNA appayya, SankarābharaNam narasayya, Durbar Seetārāmayya, Choukkam Veerabhadrayya, pacchimiriyam Adiyappaiya, Sonti Venkatasubbaiya, Sri Rāmaswamy Dikshitar and, Melattur Venkatarāma Sastry*, enthralled the *cognizant* and the *uninitiated*

music fans, with elaborate rAgAs and lengthy concerts studded with *tānam* and *pallavi*. Some of the well-known musicians of those times considered to be great experts of some rAgAs that connoisseurs & patrons bestowed the names of these rAgAs as titles or 'prefixes' to their names. Lyrical content was given very little prominence. Such raga-centric recitals were patronized by Kings, Zamindars, land lords and affluent temples (reminding us of the patronage and practice of Hindusthani music at around the same time in the Northern provinces).

On the other side of the spectrum were saints and Sankeertana Bhāgavatās who utilized Carnatic music to attract more devotees towards Sankeertana-Paddati (tradition) which was, nevertheless, blessed with thousands of devotional compositions from hundreds of composers including *Jayadeva, Kampa-chakravarti, dāsara sangha (since the advent of Purandara dāsa), tālappāka Annamayya, Mahākavi KshEtrayya, Bhadrāchala Rāmadāsa, Narāyana teertha, Sadāsiva Brahmendra, Azhwārs, nāyanmārs, Arunagirinātha & Arunāchalakavi*, to name a few. This age-old tradition, Sankeertanam, was gaining great momentum from 15th through the 18th centuries, as the performers from this forum focused primarily on Bhakti-Bhava by singing 50-100 songs in a single performance; they were not keen on showing off their musical prowess in *taanam*, *niraval*, or complex *solfa* patterns.

The need of the hour was the birth of a spiritual visionary who would be blessed with *sangIta-sāstra-lakshnam* who could also blend in to the compositions, the '*bhAva-trayam*', viz., *Sangeeta bhāvam, sāhitya bhāvam and Bhakti bhāvam*, to help the music fans experience an elevated state of musical ecstasy.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH (1767-1847):

Tyāgabrahmam was born as the youngest son to *Kākarla Rāma Brahmam* and *Sitamma* on Sarvajit-

Chaitra-Pushya corresponding to 4th May, 1767, in TiruvArUr in Thanjāvur district, India according to the main tradition (while some stray opinions indicate *circa* 1759 as his year of birth). He was later known as Tyāgarāja (King of renunciation), the name of the presiding deity at the famous shrine in TiruvArUr, also known as ‘moksha-kamalAlayam’, a town historically associated with one of the greatest Saivaite saints, ‘Sundaramurti nāyanār.’ This divine town also gave to the music world two more gems, contemporaries of Tyāgarāja; Syāmā sāstry and MutthuswAmi Dikshitar. TiruvArUr also had the distinction of being one of the cultural head-quarters of the Kaveri delta where the Lord Tyāgarāja/Tyāgesa was worshipped by the Thanjavur (MarAtha) kings as their patron deity. Tyāgarāja’s *maternal* grandfather Girirāja Kavi, an AsthAna vidwān (for several mahārājās) of ThanjAvur court, was a great poet and exponent of Yaksha-gāna (Bhāgavata-Melas) such as *Rajamohini Kuravanchi* and *Leelavati Kalyanam*. Tyāgarāja learned scriptures, the great epics, Bhagavad-Gita and mahā-purāNās from his learned father who was also a great *upanyāsaka*. Young Tyāgarāja also learned playing Veena from his maternal grand uncle (Veena) *Kālahastayya* (from whose archives, he was reported to have found one of the great treatises on music, ‘nāradeeyam’).

RāmaBrahmam migrated with his family to Thiruvaiyaru, a historical town situated at the confluence of five rivers including Kaveri, when Tyāgarāja was about 7 years old. After his BrahmOpadesam (initiation) at the age of 8, Tyāgarāja started assisting his father in his nitya-pujānushTānam (daily prayer routine). It is believed that, on those occasions, he sang ‘*namO namO rāghavāya anisam*’ (according to his disciple Walajahpet Venkataramana Bhagavatar, whereas Subbarāma Dikshitar claims in *SangIta sampradAya pradarsini* that it was *Yela needaya!*). This was followed by several dozen compositions. Recognizing his potential, RāmaBrahmam took his son to Vidwan *Sonti VenkataramaNayya* for formal training in Veena and vocal music. The Walajapet manuscripts have noted that, in a few years, VenkataramaNayya, a mahāvidwān and the principal musician at the court of Raja Sarfoji Bhonsale II, rejoicing at his star disciple’s talents, sent for him to sing to an assembly of leading musicians at the court of Thanjavur. When Tyāgarāja presented some of his new compositions (such as ‘*Jānaki RamaNa*’ and ‘*DorakunA iTuvanTi seva*’), the Guru exclaimed ‘Dorakunā iTuvanTi

SishyuDu?’ (Can anyone find a disciple like this?). On another occasion when Tyāgarāja was asked to sing at a large assembly of musicians and Pundits in Maharaja’s court, VenkataramaNayya reportedly observed in all humility [as per William J Jackson, ‘*Tyāgarāja: Life and Lyrics (1992)*’] that *Tyāgarāja’s knowledge was like a great garden while his own was like a mere sprout!* Tyāgarāja concurrently pursued Vedic education and learned hundreds of compositions of *Annamayya, Kshetrayya, Narayana-teertha, Purandara Dasa, Bhadrachala Rāmadasa, Sadasiva Brahmendra and Upanishad Brahma Yogi (cognomen of Rāmachandrendra Sarasvati)*.

Young Tyāgarāja (12-13 years of age) was so greatly influenced by the upanyāsams of Upanishad Brahmamendrā (believed to be a childhood friend of RāmaBrahmam) that he turned his full focus on Sri Rāma for the rest of his life. Upanishad BrahmendrA (also known as Upanishad Brahmam) invited Tyāgarāja in 1839 (for the first time, as per





the original *Srimukham* held in muTT's records) to visit him in Kaanchipuram. Upanishad Brahmam was *not* the preceptor who initiated Tyāgarāja into Rāma-mantrOpadEsam (as some publications claim). Tyāgarāja, when he was 17 years old, was initiated into Sri-Rāma-tāraka-mantra by Yatindra Rāmakrishnānanda Swami and completed recitation of that mantra 960 million times before he turned 38 years of age. Scholars assert that Tyāgarāja salutes this Rāmakrishnānanda as one of his Gurus in his *Nauka charitram*.

Music fans with strong faith in purāNic lore, maintain that Tyāgarāja was the reincarnation of Saint Valmiki and that Sage Narada (who blessed and prompted the hunter Valmiki to give the magnum opus epic of Rāmāyana) also reappeared as a Yogi and offered the profound work “*SwarArNavam*”, which helped Tyāgarāja's mastery over lakshaNa and lakshiya aspects of KarnāTaka-SangItam. An overwhelmed Tyāgarāja thanks Sage Narada through his gems, *nārada Guruswamy*, *Varanārada*, and *Srinārada*. During this phase, Tyāgarāja sang many kritis which describe his Rāmānubhavam as blissful experiences in dream and in person; some of these kritis include the following; *Yelā needaya rādu*, *kanukonTini*, *Giripai nelakonna*, *intakannānandamemi*.

Despite several ardent and frequent invitations, Tyāgarāja refused royal patronage or an affluent life style; he chose the millennia old tradition of ahimsa, vairAgyam, sacrifice and simple living by adopting the ‘Oonchavritti’ upāyam (approach) for daily subsistence. In essence, from the times of *namO namO Rāghavāya* to *Yelā needayarādu*, the period between 1767 and 1805 can be described as the first phase of Tyagabrahmam's musical life.

It is believed that the second phase of his life (1805-1839) was filled with travels (kshEtrāDanam or divine tours) to *Sri Rangam*, *Tirumala/Tirupati*, *Kanchipuram*, *TiruvoTriyur*, *TiruvallikkeNi*, *Rameswaram*, and *Nagapattinam*. During this phase, he composed several hundreds of kritis which showed remarkable music prowess, exemplary kavItvam (poetic excellence), and exquisite coordination of bhava-raga-tala, coupled with extraordinary story-telling, packed in four to eight lines, mostly on Rāmāyana and Rāma.

The final phase of life (1839-1847) - upon return from kshEtrāDanam to his final days - can be described as the quintessential part of this vākgEyakāra's life. During these years, he received a lot of musicians and scholars from far and wide, and spent most of his time in nitya-Sankeertanam, Japa-yogam, GAnAnjali. Some of his gems with great philosophical import came about during this period; *Giripai nelakonna* in sahAna and ‘*paritāpamu ganiyāDina palukula marachitivO*’ in manohari, to cite a few.

Tyāgarāja's Immortal Contributions:

As we saw earlier, Tyāgarāja's advent was around the period of renaissance when great musicians and musicologists were reshaping the Carnatic Music that was practiced then. Tyāgarāja's music was a result of his understanding of the need of the times and his kritis were augmented by his mastery of Sangeeta sAstra, his intense devotion, his anguish over societal apathy to slipping values and his need to admonish this trend, and above all, the impact of divine Intervention on his creative genius.

Only a ‘nada-yogi’ like Tyāgarāja could define the lakshana and exalted nature of ‘absolute’ music in just a few lines set to exemplary tunes; examples are: *mōkshamu galadā*, *nāda lōluDai*, *nādōpāsanacē-śankara*, *raga-sudhā-rasa*, *swara-rāga-sudhā*, *Sripapriya sangītōpāsana*. Tyāgarāja pays homage to all the preceptors and great saints in his kritis, *vidulaku mrokkeda*, *sangīta jñānamu*, *endarō mahānubhāvu-landariki vandanamulu*. The great musicians and scholars before him tuned their compositions subsequent to completion of the lyrics, whereas for Tyāgarāja, the innovator of the ‘Kriti’ form, all of the components such as lyrical content, rAgam and tAla-gatis, studded with *sangatis* were, all at once, concurrent and spontaneous. The net result is the array of immortal compositions such as *Dorakunā iTuvanTiseva*, *kārubāru*, *Chakkanirāja*, *Rāmaneesamānamevaru*, *nājeevadhāra*, *dārini telusukonTi*. Some of his kritis, like rare white pearls, are set in grand mELakarta and rare janya rAgAs; examples of such kritis include ‘*Vanaspati*, *mAnavati*, *Denuka*, *rUpavati*, *gAngEya bhooshaNi*, *navaneetam*, *Takka*, *Bhavapriya*, *Bindu mAlini*, *Chandra Jyoti*, and the list goes on. His numerous compositions in each of *todi*, *Sankarabharanam*, *Saurashtram*, *Karaharapirya*, *Harikambhoji*, *Saveri*,

Kapi, Madhyamavati, Kedaragowla, Devagandhari, VaraLi, Kalyani, Kamavardhani and a dozen more rAgAs have been chiseled to embed the nuances of those precious rAgAs in to the sAhityams and have essentially established the grammar for each of those rAgAs. Often, in one rAga, he composed several kritis with different *varna-meTTu* (*shape of the song*).

His Ghana-rāga Panca-ratnams (five gems), in *nATa, GowLa, Arabhi, Sri Rāga and Varāli* (*shown in reported composing order; per Dr. V Sadagopan & Prof Sambamurthi*), are the most scholarly contribution to the South Indian Music. There is nothing to surpass them in terms of richness of musical composition or the flow of the most appropriate character of their *sāhitya*. His remarkable talent for conceiving melodies of variegated beauty, interwoven with phrases of sparkling designs is clearly evident in every stanza of every one of the five gems. The music world is forever indebted to this immortal saint whose SangIta kavittvam and the fine poetic imagery were and are difficult to replicate. These five kritis alone serve to showcase the depth of his knowledge and gifts in Sanskrit and Telugu. To any student of RasA & rAgA, these compositions are unparalleled examples to demonstrate how *rapture, introspection, prudence, admiration, sustained joy and humility* arising from recognition of greatness in others could effectively be portrayed by select rAgAs and special phrases interweaving them. It should be remembered that these peerless musical architectures could be rendered most effectively only by those who strive for a high degree of technical skill.

Tyāgarāja appreciated the devotion of the millions who have limited knowledge or appreciation for highly technical and structured compositions demanding sustained skills. Bhakti was his primary and ultimate goal whenever he sang any new composition. Besides his compositions, which are unparalleled in sangIta-lakshaNam and sAhitya-suddham, he also composed scores of simple songs with several 2-line stanzas that could be easily sung as devotional hymns/bhajanam by everyone, irrespective of musical training or ranking.

We can somewhat classify/list his 700+ kritis into some major categories,

Advice (nIti-bOdham): *sāntamuleka, manasu nilpa, buddhi rādu, Guruleka, ParalOka sādanamu, dhyānamE, manasu swādhīnamaina;*

- Salutation (vandanam): *viduluku mrokkedā; vandanamu raghunandana; endarō mahānubhāvulandariki;*
- Conversation with Mind: *manasā eTulōrtunē; manasā mana sāmārthyamēmi; manasā śrī Rāmuni; vinavē ō manasā;*
- Pleading, Admonishing, Complaining: *mariyāda kādurā, mariyāda kādayya, nāyeDa vañcana, nī daya rādā, Yē pāpamu cēsītirā, palukavemi, rāmacandra nī daya, kanTa jUDumI;*
- Bhakti mArgam: *ēmi jēsītēnēmi, cakkani rāja, rāmabhakti, rāmā nIyeDa, anurāgamuleni, bhakti biccamiyyavē;*
- nAma mahima: *nā jīvādhāra, smaraNē sukhamu, evarani nirNayīñcirirā, telisi rāma, sukhi-yevarō, nāma kusumamulacē*
- Nine forms of Devotion (nava-vidha-bhakti): *About 350 kritis could be classified under this head highlighting the nine forms, śravaṇam, kīrtanam, smaraṇam, pāda-sevanam, arcanam, vandanam dāsyam, sakhyam and ātma-nivedanam (Srimad Bhāgavatam - 7.5.23)*

Several scholars have performed extensive research on his kritis and set their own classification of those 700+ songs. Examples of such classifications include the following: *nāda yoga; Sādhana; nāma-māhātmya; ishTa deivatā; Forms and Phases of Bhakti; Zeal to Reform; and, Devotional Ecstasy.*

Such scholarly classifications and pertinent and colorful interpretations only reiterate the power of this magnum opus “*TyagOpanishad*” (an intellectual way of describing the 700+ gems).

Literary and Poetic Excellence:

It must be granted that, compared to his predecessors, peers, and contemporaries, Tyāgarāja commanded a greater felicity of expression, grace, and flow in style and thus he could, with much ease and effect, manage many alliterations and sound effects, especially those that are necessary for the second letter assonance or those with which he makes the ends of a line dovetail perfectly into the opening of the line or the Pallavi when it is sung and repeated, or for the Gopucchatyati or Srotovaha-yati (e.g., *Mitri-Saumitri; vAraNa-*

nivAraNa; dAntunikaina-VedAntunikaina; dAri-Sundari-Tripurasundari; Graha-anugraha-vigraha-navagraha-Nigraha (all in the kriti, Grahabala – Revagupti); and scores of such srotavAhAs, and easier examples like Guru-sadguru, rAju-rangarAju; meru-mahameru and epithets and prefixes going with Rāma are aplenty). In his DivyanAmAs there are numerous pieces with lines upon lines displaying his skill for alliteration and double entendre (slesha).

Taking a larger view, no one would have difficulty in accepting Tyāgarāja as one endowed with definite and conspicuous poetic abilities. We have already referred to the general felicity of his expression ; in ideas too, Tyāgarāja, who intentionally meant to communicate a large volume of his thoughts through his songs, shows his capacity to expand an idea with beauty, logic, and effect; he can take a central idea or an effective end of a thought in the Pallavi and elaborate it to an extent in the Anupallavi and embellish it further in the charaNās with the same architectonic skill as in expounding a Raga through opening, progression and further sweeps. Tyāgarāja, the master musician, takes off his Pallavis with a characteristic and suggestive phrase of the Raga; nevertheless, in his Sahitya, he takes off his Pallavis with an emphatic phrase or a compact idea which admits of reinforcement or illustration in the further parts of the song. Many of his songs open with striking Pallavi-words; some of the more musically celebrated masterpieces are also examples of this merit of Sahitya (such as: *Emi Jesite*—Todi is an illustration of how Tyāgarāja can’ develop a leading idea, and enrich it with a long series of supporting ideas. The analogies with which the idea is driven home in *nidhichAla* are really effective; for similar apt illustrations and striking *similes*, we can cite a number of his songs; *Guruleka, Chakkani, KARuvelpulu, tanayuni, Meevalla, Telisi Rāma, naLiNa-lochana, SarasIruhanayana, Nanu-brovakanu*. The fecundity of his imagination is brilliant in songs like *Melu-Melu* and *Nanu brovakanu* where long chains of similes are exquisitely strung.

The touch of realism and humor which enliven his expression bespeak of the Saint’s keen eye on things around him. His songs are also strewn with popular idioms, proverbs, sayings, parables and maxims. A

few of the examples are shown here, while there are dozens more to fit this table:

- *Gomukha-vyāghra*—Tiger with a cow’s face—Bhaja re RaghuvIram.
- *dutta pālu ruchi deliyu sāmyamé*—Like the vessel trying to know the taste of milk—*enta muddo*’.
- *vennayunDa nētikiyevarina vesana paDudurā*—With butter in hand, will one worry himself about ghee “>—*Kanna talli nIvu*.
- See the whole of the songs *RUkalu padivélu, Chakkani rājamārgamu, Rāmā-nIyaDa, nalinalochana (Madhyamāvati), Samayamu delisi, Balamu kulamu, and the similes in Pāhi RāmāramaNa (Varali)*.
- *Vrishabhāduluku-aTukula ruchi deliyu*—Expecting bulls to know the taste of (aval) ‘puffed rice’—*Kalinarulaku*.
- *PrāNamulenidāniki bangāru bāga chuTTi* - in Bhakti bichcha—Like dressing and decorating dead bodies.
- I and II stanzas of *Meevalla guNa*: If the gold is not of requisite quality, why blame the goldsmith? If your daughter cannot bear the labor pain, why blame the son-in-law?
- *Vittamunaku dāginaTTu veduka naduchunu—Ninnadanela* - As much fun as there is money to spend.
- *Gananātha jeya goraga gādu vanaruDai teerega* - trying to make the Image of Ganesa and producing one of a monkey—*Evarito ne delpudu*

Tyāgarāja s Devotional poetry and other literary creations:

Pious tradition believes that, on the whole, Tyāgarāja composed, to be on a par with the 24,000 slokas of Valmiki’s Rāmayana, 24,000 songs on the glory of Rāma. Even the songs that are now available, 700+, form quite a substantial contribution.

The highest musical excellence is found in his compositions (which we have come to call *kritis*),



in which he captures and effectively picturizes the essence of rAgas. In these songs, the words are reduced and scope is afforded for musical elaboration, variations, and embellishments. In his compositions, as stated earlier, there is a wide variety of form and type, from metrical compositions and settings suggested by the European band-tunes that were then familiarized, e.g., *Girirājasutātanayā* and *Raminchuvārevarura* to creations like *KoluvaivunnADE*, where sangatis are heaped and the SAhityas are moulded like Pallavis.

As part of the daily worship of the Rāma idol, he composed a series of songs expressing the several services, the shoDasa-upachārAs, forming part of the worship. At that time, the practice of celebrating the festivals of Radha-kalyanam and SitA-kalyanam in Bhajana mathās the primary place of congregation of bhāgavatās was widely prevalent in the Thanjāvur area. Tyāgarāja composed a series of songs



referred to as the Utsava-sampradAya-keertanams and Divyanama-sankeertanams for a full festival like these. These sankeertanams are in simple metrical setting so as to help congregational singing. It is in them that much of Tyāgarāja's thought has gone into; we see in them the composer's remarkable command of Sanskrit, his knowledge of rare words and compounds, and his ability to create the right sound-effects.

In addition, Tyāgarāja also produced full musical plays. During his times, in temples and certain villages of Thanjāvur, like Melattur (sometimes referred to as *Merattur*), there was the practice of enacting in abhinaya, musical plays by troupes of Bhāgavatās proficient in music and dance. Tyāgarāja had much fascination for this devotional-drama tradition (Bhāgavata-Melas) sanctified by the association of Jayadeva and his Gita Govinda and, much closer to his time, narAyaNa tIrtha and his Krishna-leela-tarangini. An elder contemporary of Tyāgarāja was an accomplished Bhāgavata-mela composer of Melattur named Venkatarāma Bhāgavata who enriched this Bhāgavata-mela-nATaka-sampradāya with his musical plays like the *Prahladacharitra*. Inspired by these, Tyāgarāja composed two musical plays, bringing out the greatness of devotion; *Prahlāda Bhakti Vijayam* and *Nauka Charitram*. These were modelled on the nATaka scheme of the Bhāgavata tradition with descriptive songs, dialogue-songs, introductory verses, and prose-passages; however, there is no confirmation that either of these works of Tyāgarāja were played as *MelAs*. There is evidence though that they were sung by devotees in Bhajanams/sankeertanams, continuously as well as in parts. It would give a wrong impression to call them operas. Sometimes an attempt is made to distinguish them from Nataka-compositions such as those of (Merattur) Venkatarāma Sāstri; the distinction will hold good only so far as practice is concerned, as Tyāgarāja's two dramatic



compositions were never enacted as per popular belief; but in theory, Tyāgarāja's compositions were no different in form, for he expressly says in his *Prahlāda-bhakti-vijaya* that it was to be sung and rendered in abhinaya.

Tyāgarāja has taken some poetic license in approaching *Prahlāda charitam*, and created a play without HiraNya-kasipu or Narasimha, but has utilized the opportunity to pay great obeisance to the great Prahlada about whom he had already sung in several kritis. He uses the play to extol the virtue of Bhakti-rahasyam in the words of Prahlada. The story of Prahlada is of primary importance to all votaries of the Bhakti-mārga, and when we consider the fact that Tyāgarāja was a Rāma-bhakta from his young years and was subject to many trials in the pursuit of the path of single-minded devotion to the Lord, there seems to be a special significance in Tyāgarāja's fascination for Prahlada's story which is, so to say, the prototype of the story of his own devotional life.

Shorter but more dramatic and more noteworthy as an artistic achievement is the musical play *Nauka-charitra* which brings out the idea of complete surrender to the Lord through a finely worked out story: the Gopis' desire to go on a boat excursion on the Yamuna, with Krishna in their midst. They are exhilarated with his love and become intoxicated with pride. The Lord who desires to render them humble and purify them, conjures up a gale which tosses the boat on the turbulent waters of the river; consternation seizes the women; suddenly they find that the craft springs leaks and the Lord grimly asks them to remove their garments, symbolic of all material trappings, and plug the holes with them. When the gOpIs surrender their pure spirit to the Lord in meek prayer, reaffirming the faith that He is the sole savior, the Lord calls off the storm and blesses His devotees. The motifs through which the ideas are worked out are variations of those in the well-known episodes of *VastrāpaharaNā* and *Rāsaleelā* from *Bhāgavata purāNa*.

Tyāgarāja's Legacy – Sishya Parampara:

He was surrounded by genuine disciples and they all looked to him as the greatest AchAryA that descended to bless them, next only to the Lord Supreme. The list of his illustrious disciples is long; it is generally believed that they were grouped under three 'schools'; Walajahpet, Tillaisthanam and Umayalpuram paramparas. There were, however, many more disciples, such as *Neykkarapatti Subbaiyer*, and *Kannayya bhagavata*, who were not part of these three schools. Many of those first generation disciples taught and polished some great disciples of their own; some names are shown for the record:

MāanambuchāvaDi Venkatasubbayya was a cousin of Tyāgarāja and the prime disciple. His star disciples included *Mahavaidyanaatha Sivan*, *Patnam Subrahmanya Iyer*, and *Sarabha Sastrigal*. (Venkatasubbaiya composed many varnams and kritis and sang a *devagandhari* kriti in praise of Tyāgarāja). *Patnam Subrahmanya Iyer trained a long line of 'who is who' in modern Carnatic music world; (Pocchi) Ramanathapuram Srinivasa Iyengar, Mysore Vasudevachar, and Tiger Varadachariar were some of those stars of the 19th/20th CE. These doyens trained two dozen disciples who became the neo-legends of modern Carnatic Music.*

Wālājāpet Venkataramana Bhāgavatar was one of the earliest disciples of Tyāgarāja. After many years of gurukulam, he established a school in Walajahpet (near Chennai) and visited his Guru periodically. A couple of years before Tyāgarāja's death, Venkataramana sent his son Krishnaswami to learn from the great Acharya and both father and son wrote the earliest biography of Tyāgarāja pooling their personal recollections and also gathering anecdotes from other disciples and admirers. These manuscripts are preserved in Madurai Saurashtra Sabha. *One of Bhagavatar's disciples was Mysore Sadasiva Rao.*

Tillaisthānam Rāma Iyengar was one of the closest disciples; *Thanjavur Rāmārāo*, who predeceased Tyāgarāja, cast Tyāgarāja's horoscope leading to the assertion of 1767 (*Sarvajit-Chaitra-Pushya*) as the birth year.



Veenai Kuppaiyer, son and disciple of Veena Sambamurthy Sastry became a disciple of Tyāgarāja. It was through Kuppaiyer that Kovur Sundaresa Mudaliar, dubAsh to East India Company, and an ardent patron of Carnatic Music, became a devotee of Tyāgarāja. At the request of Sundaresa Mudaliar, Tyāgarāja visited the Kovur Sundareswara's temple and sang the Kovur pancharatnam. Kuppaiyer and his son *TiruvoTTiyur Tyagayyar* were both composers of great merit.

Subbaraya Sastry, son of Syama Sastry, one of the Trinity, learned from his father and then learned from Muthuswamy Dikshitar; and, finally, he was directed by his father to go to Tyāgarāja for gurukulam. He composed a small number of Kritis some of which are famous.

Saint Tyāgarāja, Satguru Tyāgarāja, Tyāgarāja 'Swami':

Tyāgarāja shunned titles, awards, praise, affluence, and royal patronage (whether they were invitations from Thanjavur mahArAjAs or Tiruvananthapuram or other SamasthAnams in southern India). Excepting for visiting the temples and singing in praise of those deities of those kshEtrams, he did not believe in traveling for any other purpose. Great scholars, poets and musicians came to Thiruvaiyaru from far and near just to get his blessings. Due to paucity of space, the names of his visitors and incidents are not listed here. He lived an austere and spiritual way of life as dictated in the scriptural disciplines.

The Saint That Became Immortal Due to His Matchless Compositions:

The writer is neither a biographer on Tyāgarāja nor attempting in this writing any detailed study of Tyāgarāja as a musical genius, nor can this attempt be considered a critical analysis of his works. Among musicians of his time, Tyāgarāja was one who lived the most poignant and spiritual life of devotion; by the meaning and message packed in his songs, he takes an exalted place among the musician-saints of our country, and follows the tradition of the pioneers of

devotional poetry in southern India, the Azhvārs and the Nāyanmārs. Among the contemporaries, Tyāgarāja was a poet, preacher, and philosopher. Those that were privileged to have listened to his songs repeatedly have been mesmerized by his music, and have little knowledge of the treasure that lies underneath each one of those gems. Time and again, we sit before our favorite performers and await the magic of a specific sangati or sanchāra in that Kriti; neither the listener nor the singer can claim to have realized the vision of the composer or the thrilling poetic imagination or the philosophic truth which *that* musical flourish hides within itself. When a real devotee looks at this aspect of his *magnum opus*, he or she would only recall the true background of a religious and spiritual revival on the banks of the Kaveri, of Narāyana Tirtha, Sadasiva Brahmendra, Sridhara AyyāvāL and Bodhendra-Saraswathi and of the rise of the cult of the Lord's Name, Nāma Siddhānta, as the most potent means of realizing God. His reformist zeal for true devotion and discarding of sham and meaningless form and ritual, derived its direct inspiration from the Padās of Purandaradasa; and an entire school of Rāma Bhakti developed by saints and seers, like Rāmananda, Tulasidas, and Rāmadasa that helped his imagination on everything that was needed in his angst for the realization of Sri Rāma.

It should be remembered that millions of devotees in Bhajana-sampradAya, the Sankeertana-bhAgavatAs and other ardent commoners accompanying the deities in procession in great festivals, sang them with spiritual and devotional fervor and Bhāgavatas who expounded Harikathas found in his instructive pieces many apt songs which they could use in their discourses; this mass following continues to foster the great tradition of larger than life phenomenon called *Tyāgarāja*; many of the songs, by their theme and teaching, appear to be shaped like the most appropriate *definitions*, intended for use in such devotional and spiritual expositions.

The diluted and commercial view, I can only hope that none holds such, that we should look to his music and not to his meaning is expressly contradicted by Tyāgarāja who emphasizes in his own definition of

a Kriti that it should expound the true words of the exalted Upanishads: Nigama - sirorthamu - galgina - nija – vakkulato - swara suddhamuto' (navarasayuta-kritiche-bhajiymche.....) – “sogasugAmrdanga”

In respect of singing his songs, it is the devotional word **Bhajana** that he uses, again and again! The gusto with which he preached and the volume of valuable wisdom and experience he impounded in his songs place him among the saints whom we revere for the service they performed by periodic spiritual rehabilitation of mortals of our land. No wonder that he is revered as ‘immortal’ as his compositions, highlighting the code of conduct in daily life, are themselves immortal. Tyāgarāja resorted to adorning orange robes and became a SanyAsin in 1847; just before he left his mortal existence to reach *the permanent abode of Paramātmā*.

Carnatic Music world had/has witnessed, since the 11th CE, the emergence of several Kavis, composers, and musicologists who interpreted and codified the modern Carnatic Music; some musicians have attempted to take this complex system of music to the highest level of appreciation, nationally and internationally; however, in none we have found another ‘Tyāgarāja’ Swami who alone fits the famous maxim: there was none before and there will be none after!

[...]samo daataa *na bhUto na bhaviShyati*
aspRushanneva vittaani yaH parebhyaH
prayachChatī [subhāshita-ratnam]

Instead of direct translation, saints have interpreted this pearl of wisdom differently, which (the writer humbly believes) fits ‘Tyāgarāja-Swami’ or Satguru or ‘sAdhu-Tyāgarāja’ as he is known.

“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give...”

“Blessed are those who can give without remembering, and take without forgetting!”

Satgurubyo namaha....

Tiruvaiyaru SR Krishnan

Sangeeta Acharya Thiruvaiyaru Krishnan is a Vaggeyakara and has been a performing Carnatic musician for over sixty years. He trained under Vaggeyakara Ganabhooshanam Kumaramangalam Srinivasaraghavan, his father, and also from three of the legends of the 20th Century, Sangita Kalanidhis Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer, G.N. Balasubramaniam and Madurai Mani Iyer. An Acharya for more than 50 years, Krishnan is also a renowned exponent of the millennia old traditions, ‘Sankeertanam’ & ‘Harikatha’ and equally famous for his ‘Bhakti-Sangeet’, ‘divya-dampati vivahams’ & ‘musical saint-series’ concerts combining the Hindusthani and Carnatic systems of music since the 1980s. His AchAryAs in Sankeertanam & Harikatha traditions included Srirangam Nathamuni Narayana-Iyengar, Pudukkottai Narayana Sastri, and the legendary Swami Haridoss Giri, aka Guruji. Krishnan has numerous recordings to his credit. About 50 compact discs from some of his live performances are freely available on the internet from his website sankeertanam.com and some of the famous renditions are available on the YouTube as well. Krishnan’s major music performances since 1980s have been fund-raisers for spiritual and philanthropic causes.

A devotee and disciple of His Holiness ChandraSekharEndra Saraswati aka Kaanchi paramAchArya, Krishnan underwent Vedic/Scriptural education in Sanskrit college, Madras. He is a composer & lyricist in six languages, a poet, journalist & a novelist in both Tamil and English. His operatic creations include, ‘Sitaayaascharitham Mahat’ in three languages and ‘SaraNam Aiyappa’ in five languages. Tyagaraja Ramayanam, Tyagaraja’s nava-vida-bhakti and nada-yoga, Tyagopanishad, Divya Prabhandam and Abhanga sankeertanam have been some of his famous musicals since 1980s.

Krishnan started with Reserve Bank of India in 1965 and soon became an international banking executive in France and Great Britain; he became an US Fiduciary in early 1990s. Krishnan has served in four continents and has extensively traveled around the world. He has been a Fellow of two Royal Academic Institutions of the United Kingdom since 1980s, a member of the American Arbitration Association, CEO of one and founder principal of two other US Fiduciary firms operating in several jurisdictions at the nomination of Federal & State Agencies of the US Government.

He and his wife Radha, also a musicologist, live in southern California and are patrons of several philanthropic institutions in India, which care for mentally & physically challenged and the destitute, who the Krishnans describe as ‘God’s favorite children’. Krishnan’s prime disciples, Priya Parameswaran, Harini Vikas and Subhapiya Srivatsan, known as Krishnan Sisters, are well known Carnatic musicians from the Bay area, California. Krishnan’s siblings Smt. Bhooma Narayanan, Sri SR Lakshminarasimhan and Smt. Ramamani Ranganathan are Sankeertana Bhagavatas in India.



Press Release

The Indian Fine Arts Academy of San Diego is celebrating its 10th annual Music and Dance Festival from April 2nd through April 9th, 2017, at the Jewish Community Center in La Jolla, California. This organization is dedicated to the propagation and celebration of classical Indian music & dance in Southern California. This year, the festival has a fantastic line-up of world-renowned *vocal* and *instrumental* artists of both the *Hindustani* and the *Carnatic* genres of Indian music from India. Among the many highlights of the program are fascinating *vocal concerts by three of the leading artists of Carnatic music*, concerts that will showcase the virtuosity of artists performing on instruments such as Sitar, Chitravina and Violin, a vocal Carnatic- Hindustani Jugalbandhi duet, and melodious vocal concerts by several popular artists. The festival will also present some of India's most talented and engaging percussionists who will be playing on such diverse instruments as the *mridangam* the *kanjira*, the *tabla*, and the *ghatam*.

The IFAASD is also presenting Indian Classical Dance productions during the festival that promise to be marvelous aural and visual treats. These classical dance productions have been choreographed by India's most talented and experienced dancers in Bharathanatyam, Kuchipudi, and a dance Jugalbandhi between Kathak and Odissi. This year's festival includes performances by Padma Vibhushan Birju Maharaj, Padma Bhushans C.V. Chandrasekar, and Dr. L. Subramaniam, Padma Shri Aruna Sairam, Kavitha Krishnamurthi, and Satish Vyas, Sangeetha Kalanidhies M. Chandrasekaran, Trichy Sankaran, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, Guru Neyveli Santhanagopalan, Vidwan Hyderabad Brothers, Chitravina Ravikiran, Lalgudi Krishnan, Vidushies Geetha Bennett, Gayathri Venkataraghavan, and Aarti Ankalikar, and many more. The differences in theme, style of dance, costume, and musical accompaniment not only make each event unique but also have the potential to transport audiences to completely different worlds. The festival will also celebrate the 250th birth centenary of Saint Thyagaraja, Dr. S. Ramanathan's birth centenary, and 97th birthday of Bharat Rathna Ravi Shankar, and will honor the prolific contributions of some of the greatest musicians, artists, and scholars of India. There are a number of scholarly sessions led by Dr. Pappu Venugopala Rao of the Madras Music Academy. The festival will also feature two music and dance concerts performed by over a 100 children from all over Southern California. **We are honoring Mr. M. Chandrasekaran, Dr. L. Subramaniam, N. Murali, TSR Krishnan and VV Sundaram for their life time contributions.**

Throughout the festival, the patrons will have the opportunity to taste a wide range of Indian vegetarian cuisine from the South to the North and everywhere in between. The festival is certainly a must attend event for all as it promises to delight the eyes, ears, and stomach. Please visit our website at <http://www.indianfinearts.org> for more information.

Contact: Shekar 858-442-1586

Raji – 858-663-8251 Narayanan – 858-248-2851

A. Damoor, N. Gopalan, A. Krishnan, S. Murthy, S. Nandagopalan, R. Nandakumar, S. Nayak, R. Nathan, N. Patel, L. N. Peesapati, S. Pottathil, T. Rao, K. Sharma, K. Srinivasan, R. Subramanian, C.M Venkatachalam, S. Viswanathan
**A non-profit community based organization with the purpose of promoting Indian Classical Music, Dance and Arts
16051 Avenida Calma, Rancho Santa Fe, CA 92091. Phone 858- 442-1586**

INDIAN FINE ARTS ACADEMY OF SAN DIEGO
presents



EVENT # 10A
April
08
2017

SATURDAY
06:45 PM - 07:30 PM



10th Annual
**Music & Dance
FESTIVAL**

Felicitation Ceremony

Festival Co-Chairs:
Supervisor **Kristin Gaspar**
Council Member **Barbara Bry**

Guest of Honors
Ambassador **Venkatesan Ashok**
Dr. **Joel Day**
Executive Director, City of San Diego

Honorees:
Sangeetha Kalanidhi
M. Chandrasekaran
Padma Bhushan
Dr. **L. Subramaniam**
Sri. **N. Murali**
Sangeetha Acharya
Tiruvaiyaru **SR Krishnan**
Rasika Shiromani
VV Sundaram



Matru Devo Bhava - Carnatic Jugalbhandi

EVENT # 10B
April
08
2017

SATURDAY
07:45 PM - 09:45 PM

Sangeetha Kalanidhi
M. Chandrasekaran & smt. G. Bharathi
(Carnatic Instrumental)

Mridangam : **Mannargudi Easwaran**
Ghatam : **H. Sivaramakrishnan**

Tickets:
Before March 19, 2017: **\$30 & \$40**
After March 19, 2017 : **\$35 & \$45**
Free for 2017 Subscription and
Subscription Plus Patrons
All above 5 years old must have a ticket

Venue:
David and Dorothea Garfield Theater
Jewish Community Center, LA Jolla 92037

Please become a Subscription Plus Patron to save money and preferred seating for ticketed events

Support
Provided by:



Aler 858-775-5473 | Ananda 619-873-5206 | Kalpana 858-761-1839 | Kasturi 760-696-3377 | Lakshminarayana 619-427-1086 | Narayanan 858-592-4133
Neha 858-231-6484 | Raji 858-509-3910 | Rekha 858-437-3358 | Revathi 858-793-7163 | Sai 858-337-6652 | Shashi M 619-562-0814 | Shashi P 858-776-1956
Shekar 858-442-1586 | Shri 858-922-2784 | Suman 858-349-8293 | Tadimeti 858-792-7953 | Venkatachalam 858-232-6459

visit www.indianfineartsacademy.org for schedule of events and tickets

Thiruvaiyaru Krishnan

is a Vaggeyakara and has been a performing Carnatic musician for over sixty years. He trained under Vaggeyakara G a n a b h o o s h a n a m K u m a r a m a n g a l a m Srinivasaraghavan, his father, and also from three of the legends of the 20th Century, Sangita Kalanidhis Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer, G.N. Balasubramaniam and Madurai Mani Iyer. An Acharya for more than 50 years, Krishnan is also a renowned exponent of the millennia old traditions, 'Sankeertanam' & 'Harikatha' and equally famous for his 'Bhakti-Sangeet', 'divya-dampati vivahams' & 'musical saint-series' concerts combining the Hindusthani and Carnatic systems of music since the 1980s. His AchAryAs in Sankeertanam & Harikatha traditions included Srirangam Nathamuni Narayana-Iyengar, Pudukkottai Narayana Sastri, and the legendary Swami Haridoss Giri, aka Guruji. Krishnan has numerous recordings to his credit. About 50 compact discs from some of his live performances are freely available on the internet from his website sankeertanam.com and some of the famous renditions are available on the YouTube as well. Krishnan's major music performances since 1980s have been fundraisers for spiritual and

philanthropic causes.

A devotee and disciple of His Holiness Chandra Sekharendra Saraswati aka Kaanchi paramAchArya, Krishnan underwent Vedic/Scriptural education in Sanskrit college, Madras. He is a composer & lyricist in six languages, a poet, journalist & a novelist in both Tamil and English. His operatic creations include, 'Sitaayaascharitham Mahat' in three languages and 'SaraNam Aiyappaa' in five languages. Tyagaraja Ramayanam, Tyagaraja's nava-vida-bhakti and nada-yoga, Tyagopanishad, Divya Prabhandam and Abhanga sankeertanam have been some of his famous musicals since 1980s.

Krishnan started with Reserve Bank of India in 1965 and soon became an international banking executive in France and Great Britain; he became an US Fiduciary in early 1990s. Krishnan has served in four continents and has extensively traveled around the world. He has been a Fellow of two Royal Academic Institutions of the United Kingdom since 1980s, a member of the American Arbitration Association, CEO of one and founder principal of two other US Fiduciary firms operating in several jurisdictions at the nomination



of Federal & State Agencies of the US Government.

He and his wife Radha, also a musicologist, live in southern California and are patrons of several philanthropic institutions in India, which care for mentally & physically challenged and the destitute, who the Krishnans describe as 'God's favorite children'. Krishnan's prime disciples, Priya Parameswaran, Harini Vikas and Subhapriya Srivatsan, known as Krishnan Sisters, are well known Carnatic musicians from the Bay area, California. Krishnan's siblings Smt. Bhooma Narayanan, Sri SR Lakshminarasimhan and Smt. Ramamani Ranganathan are Sankeertana Bhagavatas in India.