



YOUTH ASSOCIATION FOR CLASSICAL MUSIC

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DHWANI

Dear Readers,

We today step into the last day of our anniversary celebrations. It has been a grand success and we thank all our rasikas for extending their support and encouragement to the new committee.

Our valedictory function today is being presided over by Sangeetha Kalanidhi Padmashri Sikkil Sisters Smt. Kunjumani and Smt. Neela. It is indeed an honour for us to have them in our midst today.

Today's Dhvani carries a brief profile on the artists. Nisha P Rajagopal shall be singing today. She is a singer of repute and has promising talent. The issue also carries articles on Shri Swathi Thirunal and Shri N Ramani.

We again thank our readers for making the anniversary a memorable event.

Sangeetha Vasudevan
(Editor – Dhvani)

ARTISTS PROFILE

Nisha P Rajagopal:

Nisha P Rajagopal, a rising young star in the field of Carnatic Music, commenced her musical training with her mother, Smt. Vasundhra Rajagopal. In 1995 she shifted to Chennai with her family and continued her training with the Sangeetha Kala Acharya Shri T. R. Subramanyam. She is currently training with Sangeetha Kala Acharya Shri P. S. Narayanaswamy and Nadakkanal Smt. Suguna Varadachari. She has performed at all the leading sabhas in Chennai such as Narada Gana Sabha, The Music Academy, Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, The Mylapore Fine Arts, ets. She has also won several awards and recognitions. She is also the recipient of scholarships. Nisha holds a B.E. degree in Electronics and Communications Engineering from the University of Madras. She is a graded artist of the All India Radio.

B Ananthkrishnan:

A talented violinist, Ananthkrishnan is the disciple of his grandfather Late VK Venkata Ramanujam. He is also the maternal great grandson of Vidwan Late RS Gopalakrishnan. He is learning Hindustani classical music from Dr. Smt. N. Rajam and his father Dr. V Balaji. He is also learning advanced Carnatic violin techniques from Vidwan Sh. Kovai Dakshinamurthy and Western Music fom Sh. VS Narasimhan. He has received the title of 'Mazhalai Medai' from the popular tamil Magazine Ananda Vikatan in the year 1991. He has also bagged the award for Best Violinist from Shri Krishna Gana Sabha and The Music Academy. He has accompanied several leading senior and junior artists.

B Srivatsan

Srivatsan, the young and upcoming Mridangist, initially learnt from Pammal Sri Krishnamurty. Presently he is under the tutelage of Guruvayur Sri.Durai. Srivatsan has many prizes and awards to his credit. He has accompanied junior as well as senior artists in many leading sabhas in the country.

Nerkunam Shankar

A disciple of the Kanjira Maestro, Shri Hari Shankar, Nergunam Shankar is a rapidly rising artist. He started learning in 1994 and has been performing for more than ten years now. He has performed at all leading sabhas in the city, both on season and off-season.

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PRABHALA MARRIAGE CATERERS

SWATHI THIRUNAAL

Swati Thirunal, the musician king of the state of Travancore is regarded as one of the foremost composers of his time and a great devotee of Lord Padmanabha (Lord Vishnu). He was born in the year 1813 to the Queen regent Rani Gouri Lakshmi Bayi. He was named as per the family tradition of naming the princes after the star. That is the reason he came to be called as Swathi (star name) Thirunal Rama Varma.

He was a born intellect and acquired various skills right from his early age. Tutors were appointed for teaching him different subjects and language. The young Swati Thirunal was thought Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Persian, Hindi and Marathi besides the mother tongue. The extraordinary intellectual exuberance of Swathi Thirunal and the deeper interest and insight he showed in music and literature, amazed his tutors and the British personalities who visited the state.

Swati Thirunal is credited with composing around 400 compositions in Sanskrit, Malayalam, Hindustani, Telugu and Kannada. The bulk of his compositions are dedicated to Lord Vishnu though some are addressed to Lord Shiva and Devi. His conspicuous compositions include the 'Navaratnamaalika' - nine compositions devoted to the nine forms of 'bhakti' - and the Navaraatri Kirtanams - the nine compositions dedicated to the nine-day Navaraatri festival and which as per tradition are still sung at the 'Navaraatri Mandapam' the concert hall attached to the Padmanabhaswamy Temple at Thiruvananthapuram.

Some of his favorite works were Kripaya Paalaya in Charukesi, Suma Sayaka in Kaapi, Gopa Nandana in Bhushavali, Deva Deva Kalayaami in Mayamalavagowla, Pannagendra Shayana in Ragamalika. One of his brilliant achievements is the 'Ragamala', which gives a detail account on the ten incarnations of Vishnu.

Swathi Thirunal's reputation as a patron of cultural activities attracted several musicians, dancers and writers from all parts of India to his court. Erimman Thampi, often refereed as the court poet, was also a great musical composer. Many of the songs of Thampi have become immensely popular on account of their pleasing melody as well as their sweet language. Among the musical celebrities who adorned his court were four brothers Vadivelu, Sivanandam, Chinnaiah and Ponniah, all experts and exponents in several branches of music and dance.

Swati Thirunal is no doubt a very liberal person as far as music is concerned. But when it came to the administration of the kingdom, he was a true, selfless and relentless king. He never excused anybody for any wrong done and strongly opposed nepotism.

The patronage given by Swati Thirunal to music and the encouragement given to the musicians and artistes deserve the highest praise. His achievements are gratefully remembered, and his example will ever serve to inspire the world in the promotion of fine arts. His memory will forever be cherished as one of the greatest patrons of music and art in South India.

The Maharaja died at a young age of thirty-four. Many believe that his death is shrouded in mystery. But the early death of the Maharaja was a irreparable loss to the music fraternity.

YACM THANKS ITS SPONSOR
SREE BROS CONSTRUCTION (12, Sreedevi Chny, Ashok Nagar, Ch 83)

FLUTE RAMANI – TALENT UNPARALLELED

Dr. N Ramani was born in the holy town of Thiruvavur in the year 1934, which has been the birthplace of our holy trinity of Carnatic Music and of several noble saints and musicians. Born in a family of rich musical tradition, young Ramani grew up in an atmosphere charged with music. His grandfather, and first Guru, Sri Aazhiyur Narayanaswami Iyer was a well known flute artist who could play other instruments and also sing.

Noting Ramani's natural attraction to music and to the flute, his grandfather started instructions on the flute at the age of 5, the formal initiation age. On a memorable day, Ramani's uncle Sri T.R.Mahalingam, the celebrated flute artist, popularly known as Mali, had a concert at Tiruvavur. Ramani attended this concert spell bound and was inspired by it. The next day, in the presence of Mali, he reproduced many songs from that concert. Mali was so impressed by the natural control of Laya and Sruthi of the young Ramani who was just 9 years old, that he himself undertook to train Ramani. Since Mali was mostly at Madras, Ramani would spend his vacation from school, at Madras and got intense training from Mali. After completing the school education, Ramani's family moved over to Madras permanently to enable Ramani to get further training from Mali, as well as to pursue a musical career.

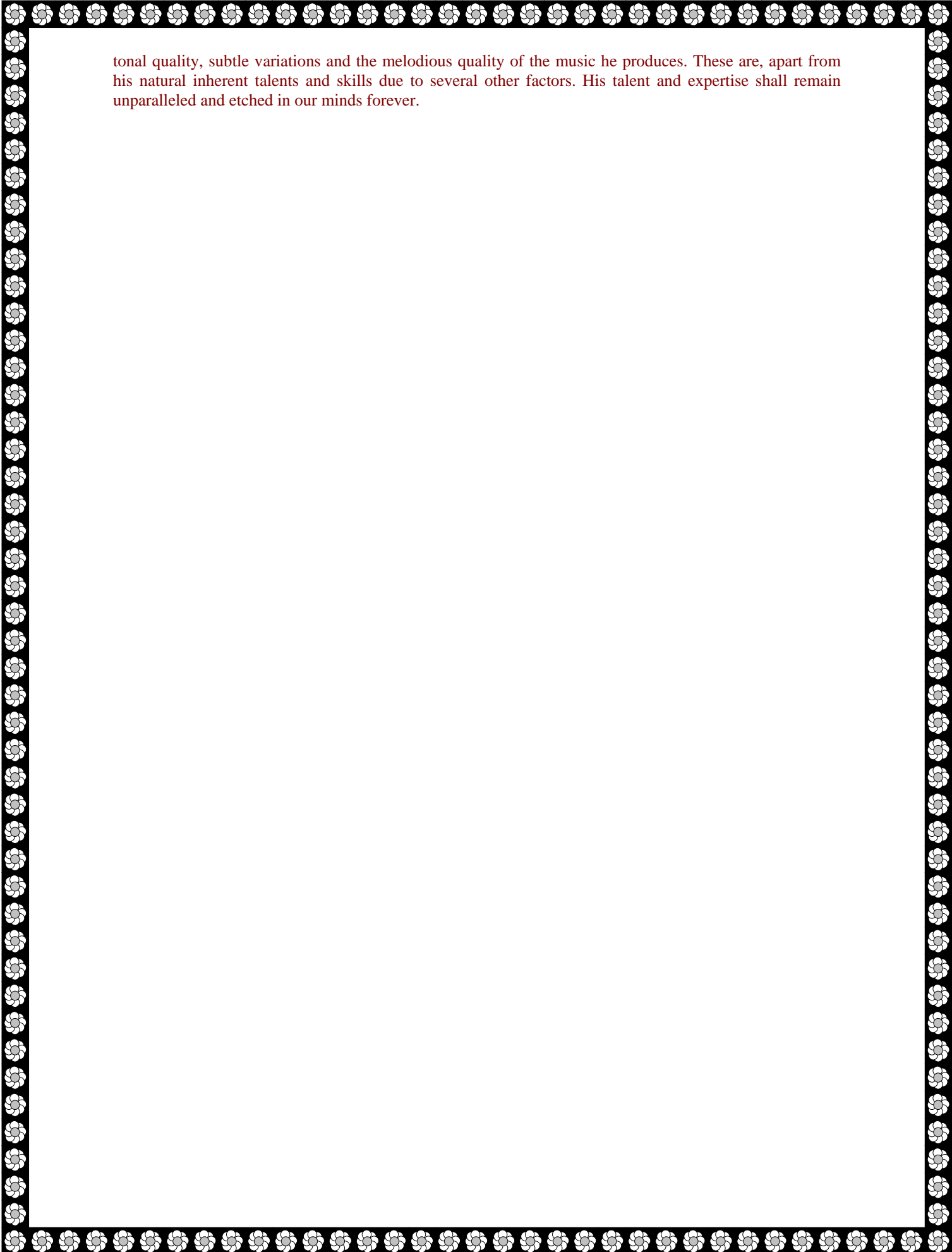
Dr. Ramani's Arangetram, was performed in 1942 when he was just 8 years old, in the holy shrine of Chikkil Singara Velan the famous temple of Lord Subramanya, the favourite Deity of Sri Muthuswamy Dikshitar of the Carnatic Music Trinity. In 1945, while undergoing intense training at Madras under Mali, Ramani got the opportunity to accompany Sri T.R.Mahalingam in a flute concert, given at Rasika Ranjani Sabha, Madras to the accompaniment of Sri. T.N.Krishnan on the violin, and Sri Muruga Bhupathy on the Mridangam. Ramani's performance on that day drew appreciation from Mali himself and other vidwans and fans present.

Many famous vidwans listened to Ramani's flute concerts while he was very young and not only appreciated them, but also predicted a great future and blessed him. Sri Palladam Sanjiva Rao, Sri Tiruppampuram Swaminatha Pillai, two famous flute artists, Sri Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, Alathoor brothers, Madurai Mani Iyer, Chembai Vaidhyanatha Bhagavathar were among those vidwans who encouraged Dr. Ramani while he was a young artist.

In the year 1956, at the age 22, Ramani got married, and in the same year his first flute concert at the Music Academy, Madras was given. Since then, his concerts at the Music Academy became a regular feature. He is also on the expert committee of the music Academy, Madras. Just as the Madras Music Academy concert of 1956 was a mile-stone in Dr. Ramani's great career; other concerts around this period deserve special mention. The concerts at Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, Sri Bala Subramanya Sangeetha Sabha, The Mylapore Fine Arts, all at Madras, were noteworthy because, in these, Dr. Ramani was provided with accompaniments of well established top ranking artist like Sri. Lalgudi Jayaraman, Sri. T.N.Krishnan, Sri M.S.Gopalakrishnan, Sri Palghat T.S.Mani Iyer and other eminent artists. Other leading music centres like Tamil Isai Sangam, Inidan Fine arts, Kalakshetra, Kartik Fine Arts, all at Madras, and other leading sabhas of Madras, Bombay, Bangalore and other cities followed this example.

Dr. Ramani's popularity as a flute artist grew far and wide and his fame spread to international level. His global concert tours and performances all over the world, became a regular feature. Dr. Ramani had received awards and honors directly from the Presidents and the Prime Ministers of India and the Holy Sri Sankaracharya Swamigals of Sri Kanchi Peetam and Sri Sringeri Peetam. The sangeetha Choodamani (1971) Kalaimamani (1973), the Doctorate (1980), the Sangeetha Nataka Academy Award (1984-85), the Padmashree (1987), the honorary citizenship of Maryland, the state of Maryland and the district of Columbia, Washington DC (USA) (1993-94) are some of the honours he has received. They are listed separately in the appendix.

Dr. Ramani is identified easily from his flute performances by his own characteristic, strong, pleasing, soft



tonal quality, subtle variations and the melodious quality of the music he produces. These are, apart from his natural inherent talents and skills due to several other factors. His talent and expertise shall remain unparalleled and etched in our minds forever.