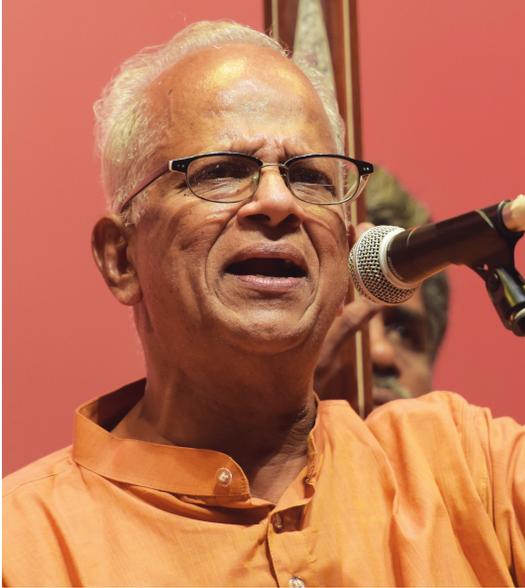


SEASON 2015-16

Sabhas honour veterans

HARIHARAN SANKARAN



T.V. Sankaranarayanan

TVS. Those three are magic letters in Tamil Nadu, signifying as they do an iconic business group that meant safety, reliability and punctuality to thousands who used the bus service launched by the grand old man T.V. Sundaram Iyengar in the last century.

The Carnatic music world boasts yet another TVS, a Sangita Kalanidhi of the Music Academy, no less, someone who could be relied upon to deliver time after time. A vocalist famed for his emotive style of singing based on the sruti-perfect, exciting bani of his charismatic uncle Madurai Mani Iyer, T.V. Sankaranarayanan came as a breath of fresh air to the scene in the 1960s at a time when the past masters were beginning to fade away.

Today, TVS continues to be a sought after, acclaimed vocalist. He still sings with great zest and verve, still appeals to a fan following devoted to his independent style of delivery.

Born on 7 March 1945 at Mayiladuturai in Tanjavur district, TVS had the good fortune of learning at the feet of the legendary Madurai Mani Iyer, his maternal uncle, from the age

of nine. Father Vembu Iyer, who was Mani Iyer's disciple as well as faithful caregiver, and mother Gomathi, sister and disciple of Mani Iyer, were both Sankaranarayanan's early music teachers, before he began to train with Mani Iyer himself. As Mani Iyer's vocal accompanist on stage, he so impressed veteran musicians, that senior violinists and mridanga vidwans encouraged him to ascend the concert stage on his own.

TVS qualified in commerce and law. and was called to the Bar in 1967. "But the call of music won hands down." He made his solo debut in 1968, accompanied by T.N. Krishnan (violin), Vellore Ramabhadran (mridangam) and Alangudi Ramachandran (ghatam), and never looked back, though a tour of the United States years later played a decisive role in shaping his future. The concerts and lectures he had to deliver across the country gave him a new confidence, and he came back a more mature artist than when he left Indian shores.

There had been a time when young Sankaranarayanan was a keen cricketer and cricket follower, besides being a brilliant scholar and avid reader of English literature. A student of Vivekananda College and Madras Law College, he made his decision on a career in music on the advice of his uncle. TVS might have been imitative of Madurai Mani Iyer in his early concerts, but he was following a model eminently worthy of emulation. Mani Iyer's pure voice and delightful swara improvisations appealed to the commoner and the elite alike. His artistic integrity was held in high esteem, and Sankaranarayanan, too, chose the same majestic path of immaculate sruti alignment and cascades of sarvalaghu swaras that had become the Madurai Mani trademark. He also paid much attention to raga alapana and niraval, other improvisational elements in Carnatic music. He is one of the rare artists to give special importance to viruttam singing in his concerts, with his intense bhakti charging these essays in raga music with great power. He excelled himself in the compositions his uncle had made famous, including some lilting numbers in the later part of the concert after the main raga had been exhaustively delineated. To these delightful elements of his guru's oeuvre, he added a more full-throated, emotion-filled vocalisation accompanied by dramatic gestures.

Once TVS became a household name in Carnatic music, many awards and honours came his way, with the Padma Bhushan, Sangeet Natak Akademi and Sangita Kalanidhi awards the crown jewels to adorn his glittering career.

TVS has travelled on concert tours of the U.S.A., Canada, the U.K., Australia, Dubai, Muscat, Kuwait, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Sri Lanka. Notable concerts abroad are the 'Millennium 2000' concert at the Lincoln Centre, Broadway, New York, for Bharatiya

Vidhya Bhavan, USA, in 1999; and the Silver Jubilee concert for the Carnatic Music Association of North America (CMANA), New York in 2001.

TVS has been a Top Grade Artiste of the All India Radio and Doordarshan for almost three decades. He held the distinguished position of Member, Executive Board, Sangeet Natak Akademi and is a member of the All India Musicians Group (AIMG). Numerous laurels, accolades, titles and awards like the Sangeeta Choodamani, Tamil Isai Vendar, Gandharva Gana Mani, Sangita Kala Sikhmani, Gnana Kala Bharati, Sangeeta Chakravarty, have sat lightly on TVS.

In the words of an admirer, TVS has “kept alive the glorious tradition of his family and lofty standards of excellence in music set by his grandfather the scholarly musicologist Madurai Ramaswamy Iyer, his granduncle Madurai Pushpavanam Iyer, a legend in his own lifetime, and his uncle, the inimitable Madurai Mani Iyer.”

Sankaranarayanan’s vocalist son Sankara Mahadevan has shown promise of carrying on the tradition, while his daughter Amruta, too has been one of his notable disciples.

After a few years when he seemed to be plateauing, something every artist goes through at some stage of his career, TVS has in the recent past bounced back, touching mid-season form as it were – as one of his favourite authors, P.G. Wodehouse, was wont to describe his endearing characters. Sankaranarayanan will receive the title of Nadabrahmam from Narada Gana Sabha this December season.

V. RAMNARAYAN

Haridwaramangalam A.K. Palanivel

Born in 1948 in Haridwaramangalam, Tamil Nadu, A.K. Palanivel started learning the tavil at the age of seven from his father S. Kumaravel Pillai. He later received training from tavildar Tirucherai G. Muthukumaraswamy Pillai. He started providing tavil accompaniment to senior nagaswara vidwans from the age of twelve, and made the grade of a special tavil artist within three years, so precocious was his talent.

Palanivel’s versatility earned him invitations to provide tavil accompaniment not only in nagaswaram performances, but also in violin, flute, mandolin, clarinet, saxophone and vocal music as well as in Bharatanatyam concerts. He has played in high profile jugalbandi performances.

Palanivel has performed all over India and in several countries overseas. He was one of the star performers in the Festival of India held in Switzerland and Japan. An innovative artist, he conceived and presented *Nada Laya Natyam* (dance to the complex rhythms of the tavil) in several places.

Palanivel is one of the secretaries of the Sri Tyagabrahma Mahotsava Sabha, Tiruvaiyaru. He has been a visiting professor in the Tamil Nadu Government Music College, Tiruvaiyaru, and at the Wesleyan and Yale universities in the United States. He has served as Dean,



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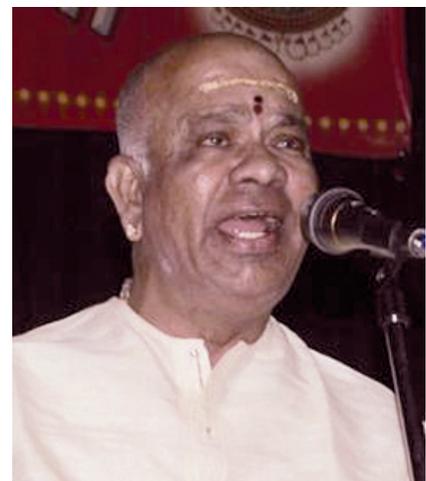
Faculty of Fine Arts, Annamalai University. He has developed a distinctive style both as an accompanist and solo percussionist. Besides, he has experimented with world music.

Palanivel is a Top Grade artist of All India Radio and is the first tavil artist on whose career and accomplishments a dissertation has been written for an M.Phil degree in the Bharatidasan University.

He was made State Artist of Tamil Nadu in 1981. Among other honours, Palanivel has received the Kalaimamani title from the Tamil Nadu Eyal Isai Nataka Manram (1980), the Central Sangeet Natak Akademi award (2001) and the Padma Shri (2004). A.K. Palanivel receives the Isai Perarignar award from the Tamil Isai Sangam, Chennai.

Tadepally Lokanadha Sarma

Born on 8 June 1945, Lokanadha Sarma hails from a family of musicians from Tenali



in Andhra Pradesh. He was initiated into music by his father T.V. Subrahmanya Sastry and was later groomed by Musiri Subramania Iyer and Chittoor Subramania Pillai.

With a doctorate in music for his research on “A Study of Musical Instrumentation with Particular Reference to Sanskrit Musical Literature”, Dr. Sarma is interested in classical music as well as other musical forms, including folk songs of different regions.

Sarma is an “A” Grade Artist of All India Radio. In 1989, Lokanadha Sarma founded Suswaraa, a fortnight-long festival to showcase fresh talent on the one hand, and to confer the title Sangita Kala Jyothi on a senior artist who is not in the limelight.

The recipient of awards like the Gana Kala Nidhi, Sangita Bhagiratha, and Sangita Ratnakara to name a few, Lokanadha Sarma receives the Sangeeta Kala Sikhamani from the Indian Fine Arts Society, Chennai.

O.S. Thiagarajan

O.S. Thiagarajan (born 3 April 1947) is a son and disciple of Sangeeta Bhushanam O.V. Subrahmanyam. He learnt music from



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vidwan T.M. Thyagarajan, while Lalgudi Jayaraman provided mentorship early in his career. An ‘A-Top’ graded artist of the All India Radio and of Doordarshan, OST is much in demand at all the leading sabhas of Chennai and elsewhere in the country. In his illustrious career he has been accompanied by top accompanists such as violinists Lalgudi Jayaraman, M.S. Gopalakrishnan, and V.V. Subrahmanyam. mridangists Palghat Mani Iyer, Palghat Raghu, Karaikudi Mani, Trichy Sankaran, and Umayalpuram Sivaraman, G. Harishankar (khanjira) and Vikku Vinayakram (ghatam). He has toured many countries, including the U.S.A., Canada, Australia, Singapore, Middle East, Malaysia, Hong Kong, South Africa, and many cities in Europe. He worked as Dean, Faculty of Fine Arts, Annamalai University, for five years. He has trained many disciples who are active in the concert circuit. S. Mahati, Dr. S. Ganesh and Delhi P. Sunderrajan are some of them.

He is the recipient of several awards including the Central Sangeet Natak Akademi award, Sangeeta Choodamani, Sangeeta Kala Sagara, and Nada Bhooshanam. O.S. Thiagarajan receives the Gaana Padhmam award from Brahma Gana Sabha, Chennai.

Parur M.S. Anantharaman

Mylapore Sundaram Iyer Anantharaman was born on 26 August 1924 to Bhageerathi and Sundaram Iyer. His father vidwan Parur A. Sundaram Iyer was his guru and mentor in music. Besides the violin, he learnt to play the veena, and received training in Hindustani music as well.



The veteran violinist has been performing Carnatic music for over 77 years. He made his debut at the age of six at the Sri Tyagaraja Sangeeta Vidwat Samajam in Mylapore, Chennai. Besides playing solo concerts he has played duets with his famous brother M.S. Gopalakrishnan. He now plays violin trios with his sons M.A. Sundareswaran and M.A. Krishnaswami. In his long career as accompanist he has played the violin for several renowned musicians both in India and their tours abroad.

A reputed teacher, he served the Tamil Nadu Government Music College as Professor of Violin from 1962 to 1983. subsequently, he taught at Pittsburgh, U.S.A. for some time.

Some of the honours bestowed on Anantharaman has are the title of Kalaimamani by the Tamil Nadu Eyal Isai Nataka Manram, the TTK Award of the Music Academy, the Asthana Vidwan of the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham, and the Central Sangeet Natak Akademi award. Parur M.S. Anantharaman receives the Vaadhya Padhmam award from Brahma Gana Sabha.