

## MANOJ SIVA

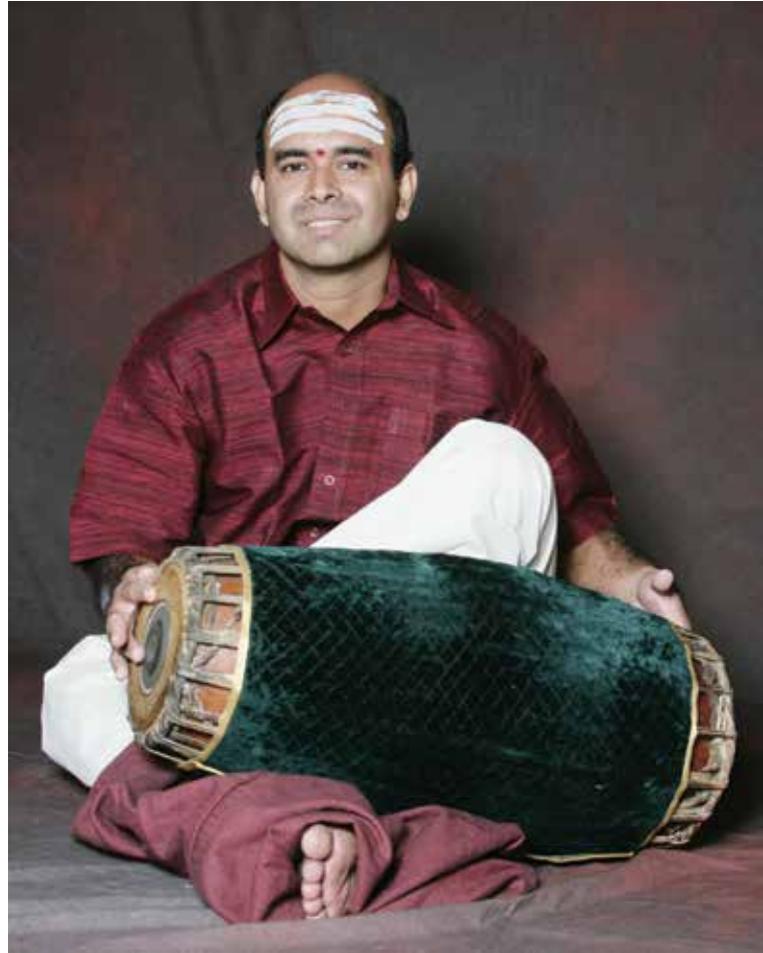
### “Accompany with understanding”

Manoj Siva, disciple of mridangam maestro Palghat Raghu, hails from a family of musicians and music lovers. His father A.N. Siva was an ardent rasika of Carnatic music, and his mother Akhila Siva, a musician, has taught many students. The parents have been instrumental in shaping the careers of all their children—Vijay Siva, Manoj Siva and Poorna Vaidyanathan. With his family as his tower of strength, Manoj Siva has carved a niche for himself as an accompanist par excellence and his success can be attributed to his diligence and hard work.

Manoj Siva is a disciplined musician trained under Kumbakonam Rajappa Iyer and Palghat Raghu. His style is replete with sunadam during accompaniment for kritis and his tani avartanams are marked with technical brilliance. A true follower of tradition and its values, Manoj Siva is a much sought after percussionist. He takes special care of the mridangam and his concert instruments have the perfect left-right balance coupled with precise meettu-chapu alignment.

Manoj Siva has performed at prestigious venues in India and abroad such as the Rashtrapati Bhavan in Delhi, Trophen Theatre in Amsterdam, and the Kennedy Centre in Washington DC. He has received many awards as a percussionist, notable among them being the Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar from the Central Sangeet Natak Akademi (2006), the Nathan Memorial Award from Sruthi Laya Kendra of Guru Karaikkudi Mani (2007) and the title of Kanchi Kamakoti Asthana Vidwan from the Kanchi Mutt (2009).

(Lto R): Manoj, Vijay and Poorna with their parents and film star Savitri



### In conversation with Mannarkoil J. Balaji

#### *Initiation into mridangam*

As a child, I showed keen interest in rhythm, tapping away on bottles, plates and whatever surface I came upon! Observing this, my parents decided to start mridangam classes for me. My father took my brother Vijay and me to guru Kumbakonam Rajappa Iyer.

My father would vividly recall those days when he used to take us to Sri Krishna Gana Sabha for Rajappa Iyer’s

With his guru Palghat Raghu





**Manoj Siva (mridangam), Sukanya (vocal support), D.K. Jayaraman (vocal), Balaji Shankar (vocal support) and K.K. Ravi (violin)**

classes in the evening. As I was only four years old, I often used to doze off during the classes. As a result, Rajappa Iyer advised my father that I rejoin after two years so that I would be old enough for lessons. To this, my father suggested

that I rather soak in the atmosphere of layam and listen to the lessons for that would in itself be a great form of learning. Rajappa Iyer cheerfully agreed to this. Later one of his senior disciples, Srirangarajapuram Jayaraman, came home and taught me and my brother for a couple of years. The fulcrum of mridangam is the fingering technique, and Rajappa Iyer was an expert in imparting it to his students. He laid a strong foundation for me.

In 1992, I came under the tutelage of vidwan Palghat Raghu. I was truly blessed to learn from such great gurus as Rajappa Iyer and Palghat Raghu; being with them was an unforgettable experience. I am proud to say that both of them treated me like their son.