

P.S. NARAYANASWAMY

A great acharya

Sangita Kalanidhi Prof. Trichy Sankaran

Puliyur Subramaniam Narayanaswamy, eminent Carnatic vocalist and much sought after guru.
Born 24 February 1934, died 16 October 2020.

With the passing away of Sangita Kala Acharya P.S. Narayanaswamy, the music fraternity has lost one of its most valuable gems. Truly he was a great acharya in many respects, and in his role as a teacher he has trained many disciples and helped them to advance in their musical career. He was always willing to share his knowledge with others.

I have heard many musicians talk about his pathantara suddham and accurate notation. The students and aspiring musicians who had studied with him and received his guidance and blessings are very fortunate indeed.

PSN was a wonderful human being with pleasant manners. As an ardent disciple of Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, PSN has propagated his guru's bani among younger generations of musicians. He imbibed his guru's style in such a thorough manner that in his own concerts he had enthralled the audience with fluent sarvalaghu swaras in the Semmangudi mould. He would communicate the feeling and emotion of the sahitya with an intensity, again following the trait of his guru.

I had known PSN since the late 1950s, the time he was doing his gurukulavasam under Semmangudi and



started performing with him, providing vocal support. I fondly recall the concert of Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer at the marriage function of Radha Viswanathan in Kalki Gardens, in which I played in tandem with my guru Palani Subramania Pillai. PSN and Kedaram provided vocal support at this concert. Subsequently there were many concerts of Semmangudi in which I accompanied, and PSN had provided vocal support.

Honouring his guru
Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer



I also had the opportunity to perform in PSN's solo concerts on several occasions, notably the one at Sri Krishna Gana Sabha in the 1970s. In all these events, I noticed how faithfully he was following Semmangudi's style of music without compromising the core values of the Carnatic

tradition. I have admired his sweet voice and accommodative nature with his fellow musicians and his humility. For a person of his vidwat, he was so humble and unassuming. In my opinion he truly deserved the Sangita Kalanidhi, but I am happy that the Music Academy honoured him with the title, Sangita Kala Acharya.

As a concert musician, PSN did remarkably well and he was accompanied by many stalwarts. He has given many concerts and workshops abroad. He was best known for his kriti renderings and performance of rakti ragas. He was such a contented person that he chose to limit his concerts, and joined the Vadya Vrinda of All India Radio, Chennai in 1975, where he served as a composer and conductor of ensembles until 1992.

The passing away of vidwan P.S. Narayanaswamy has created a void in the Carnatic music field, but he has left a great legacy behind him and the bani will continue forever.

(The author is a veteran mridanga vidwan and guru)