



Sarovar 2015

*Celebrating 30
years of the Great
Lakes Aradhana
Committee*

April-May 2015



The Sarovar Team



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Sankar Krishnan



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Welcome to the *Indo-American Festival of Performing Arts—Sarovar 2015!* It is my pleasure to invite you to participate in a wonderful month of cultural enrichment and fellowship in Southeast Michigan.

The Oakland University Department of Music, Theatre, and Dance is happy to be working with the Great Lakes Aradhana Committee, an exemplary non-profit organization committed to preserving, presenting and promoting Indian art forms in the Metro Detroit area. Through this collaboration, we are offering exciting opportunities for all festival participants.

We are thrilled to host Sarovar on the campus of Oakland University. The term 'Sarovar' is a Sanskrit term for Lake - signifying the Great Lakes. Sarovar will showcase an outstanding line up of highly respected performers who will share their art forms during this month-long series of events. This festival also presents a great opportunity for Oakland University students to explore the rich cultural traditions of India and develop an understanding of Indian music. 'Indo-American Festival of Performing Arts - Sarovar 2015' promises to be a truly unique event with an outstanding line-up featuring traditional vocal and instrumental music as well as fusion music. I am personally excited to be part of Sarovar and am looking forward to seeing you at the festival.

Sincerely,

Mark Stone

Coordinator of World Music

Department of Music, Theatre, and Dance

Oakland University



The GLAC Evolution

Sankar Krishnan (Auburn Hills, MI)

As Great lakes Aradhana Committee (GLAC) celebrates its fifth year of Sarovar, Sankar Krishnan, President of GLAC and a connoisseur of performing arts shares the evolution of GLAC in this exciting interview. A portion of it is republished from Sarovar 2012:



Can you tell us the origin of GLAC?

GLAC was the result of a dream of a few music enthusiasts who felt the need to promote Indian culture through spreading of carnatic music to the local community. A beginning was made with celebration of saint Thyagaraja, one of the greatest composers of carnatic music from 17th century. We have not changed the format of this event even now. The day starts with group singing of 5 gems of the great composer followed by individual singing by local children. After a free lunch prepared and lovingly served by the local community, a grand concert follows which is usually by a visiting artist from India. The entire event is free and I must acknowledge the two factors that enable us to organize this- the willingness of Paschima Kasi temple to provide auditorium free of cost and the amazing generosity of the classical music concert lovers in Flint in under-writing the expenses of the artists.

Please tell us more about the formative years.

Encouraged by the large attendance at the Flint festival, we began organizing carnatic music concert by touring artists from India and other highly gifted artists from North America. We featured almost all top artists such as K V Narayanaswamy, Flute N Ramani, T N Seshagopalan, Bombay Jayasree, Sudha Raghunathan, Sanjay Subramaniam, T M Krishna and many others. During the initial years, GLAC operated as a subset of Michigan Tamil Sangam (MTS). With boom in auto and IT industry, the demographics of MTS changed considerably and it had to cater to the tastes and needs of a diverse population. Gradually, GLAC cut its umbilical cord from Tamil Sangam and became an independent entity.

What are some of the challenges the organization faced in the initial years?

Carnatic music has always struggled to draw popular crowd and this issue has not changed much even today. Large exodus of people after individual singing and lunch during festival, rapidly rising fees for concerts demanded by national sponsors of artists, reluctance of local community to pay to listen to a music concert, increasing unwillingness of artists to permit recording of the concert which used to defray some of the cost by sale of CDs, rising cost of auditorium rental, inconsistent support by local music teachers and parents of their students the list goes on!!!

When did your personal involvement start in the organization?

I used to attend almost all GLAC events and concerts since I moved to Detroit in 1998. I was very fortunate that my wife and two daughters also loved this form of music and we used to enjoy going to the concerts together just as we used to do while in India. I remember a concert in 2005 by a very well-known artist and there were about 25 people in the audience! At the end of the concert, one of the organizers approached me and asked if I would be interested in being part of it. The burn factor had caught on many of the die-hard enthusiastic organizers and a completely new team was being formed and I readily accepted the role of Secretary. I would consider 2006 as the beginning of GLAC- Version 2.0- and upgrade from the previous years. To start with, we registered the organization as a non-profit one. In order to bring predictability in our cash flow, we started a subscription- based model encouraging people to become members for a guaranteed set of 4 concerts in a year. We established a web site and started mass communication gradually moving away from word-of-mouth marketing of concerts. We gave visibility of future programs so that people could plan in advance. We created an organization structure with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Our new model was a great success and in five years we had reached a fairly healthy state in terms of membership base and capital.

How did the idea of Sarovar festival come about?

Towards the end of 2010, I was attending an Arangetram by the student of Vidwan Shashikiran. During dinner, Shri Shashikiran introduced me to Prof. Mark Stone, Department of Music, Theatre and dance at Oakland University and

mooted the idea of a music festival in Detroit by collaboration of OU and GLAC. So, the seeds of this festival were sown by Shri Shashikiran and we sincerely acknowledge this. Fortunately, when we followed up with Prof Mark Stone a few days later his enthusiasm had not diminished and he locked-in University facility for three days in May, 2011 for us to conduct the festival. We had 8 months to plan the event and with our new capital base and a high-energy new committee member, Sriram Ganapathy with deep marketing expertise and an MBA degree we had a head-start and as they say the rest is history!

Please tell us about Sarovar 2015?

We are extremely proud of the package we have put together for Sarovar 2015. It is the result of intensive collaborative effort with my team and also taking input from our partner at Oakland University. Over 30+ artists from India and across US and Canada will give a wide variety of performance such as lecture-demonstration, percussion jugalbandhi, fusion, pure traditional Carnatic style vocal and instrumental concerts. There is a good balance between performing youth artists from North America and visiting professional artists from India while not ignoring aspiring young children from local music schools. We have included a panel discussion with the youth where you can expect to hear them give views on like what can be done to improve the presentation of our style of music to a wider audience etc.

I have heard you say that GLAC is now on Version 3.0. Can you please explain it?

Sure! As I mentioned earlier, GLAC made a quantum leap in 2011 with increase in membership and recognition as a brand. When we analyzed that success, we found that much of it was due to the partnership we had established with institutions. We collectively agreed that the way to move forward is to collaborate with like-minded organizations, institutions, and even individuals who had a passion to promote our culture. We introduced the concept of white label. The Papanasam Sivan festival or the Annamayya festival are great examples of the success of the white label model. Our collaboration with Washtenaw Community college brought some very interesting programs. Similarly, this year we collaborated with Detroit Arab Museum and introduced our music to a hugely appreciative western audience. I could not hold my tears when we heard a comment from an Arab-American- "I had to leave Palestine when I was 6 and haven't heard such a beautiful concert in the last 60 years I have been in the US. The concert reminded me of my days back home and was the best time I've had".

So, all these initiatives are part of GLAC 3.0 where we are creating an ecosystem which I think will continue for a few more years.

Can you tell us about your team?

I'm extremely privileged to lead a passionate team of people. They all come from various professional backgrounds and what brings us all together is the common passion for music. In fact, we are one big family and we have been working together for a very long time. Each one of us know exactly what our role is and we pretty much carry it out independently. We have conference calls almost every month to check the status and the entire planner spreadsheets are updated on Google docs. For example, Artist Tour Calendar (ATC) will have details of every artist touring the country and each one of us gets to put our views on them. We also have at least 3 to 4 face-to-face meetings annually. Sriram manages our entire digital presence and marketing communications. Several people have called us to appreciate the look and feel of our website. Charu looks after the finance and maintains membership database and our books. Shiva is very meticulous in maintaining the Sound systems and also ensures that the artists get a world class experience with audio. In fact, I have heard several senior artists consistently complimenting us about it. Shiva also manages our very sophisticated archival system with a complete disaster recovery plan. Ganga takes care of the hosting and transportation needs of the visiting artists- a very tough job indeed considering that for each festival we need to host over 25+ artists. Ramamurthy manages the contracting process with national sponsors of artist, auditorium rentals and also ensuring corporate compliance. Finally, I must acknowledge the efforts of scores of volunteers who are always there to help us whenever we request.

What is your vision for the future of GLAC?

My vision of GLAC is that it becomes the most sought after platform in North America for performing arts which show cases a balanced blend of North American born artists and visiting artists from India. We want to continuously improve and keep raising the bar high and hold ourselves to very high standards. We want to always keep the interest of our paid membership base at the top of our agenda and never get swayed by any outside influence. After all, the art is much bigger than any one individual!

Twosomes and Threesomes: For Rasikas' Ears Only!

Swathy Vasudevan (Novi, MI)



Friday evening memories as a school child was sitting down to sing with Appa for many hours in a very small room, mostly the two of us and sometimes my mother would join or sometimes hum away from the kitchen. To be huddled together for many hours in the tiny 6x6 foot Puja room was sometimes enjoyable, sometimes boring, sometimes relaxing and sometimes even a mind boggling experience. My appa is an ardent Carnatic music lover and an amazing singer. He hasn't had a formal training in Carnatic music, but obviously had a keen ear for music, developed an excellent grip on hundreds of ragams. Gifted with a voice that will touch one's heart, he would render with ease elaborate alapanai of many ragams. During many of these Friday evening music sessions, he would sing a very beautiful alapanai and glance at me to see if I am following along. There would be a questioning expression on his face as if checking to see if I am making a connection.....and at the end of it, he would ask me "Ithu enna ragam therinjida kanna?" (What ragam is this my dear?). As a 54 year old, there are times I would be sitting on pins and needles and sometimes on a comfy blanket because I knew this question was always coming at the end.

The comfy blanket times were when it would be an obvious ragam like Mohanam and Appa would remark, "Sabaash kanna!!!" (Well done, my child). However, the pins and needles times are what I remember most, the moments that I reminisce and make the connection to this day. Oh, the times when I thought the alapanai sounded like Vasantha and Appa would remark, "illa kanna ithu Lalithaakum!" (No my dear, this is Lalitha ragam indeed). Another time it was Sri Ranjani and I thought it was Abhogi, or I would be confident it was Desh and it would end up being Kapi. There were many such instances and it always left me baffled. Not having had formal training, appa often couldn't point out to me what distinguished these seemingly identical ragams to an untrained ear. He could whip out a kalpana-swaram (raga improvisation using the solfege - Sa Ri Ga Ma Pa Da Ni) in any of these ragams with much ease and make it seem like it was a piece of cake. Appa could render soulful and melodic alapanai to bring out the perfect feel for that ragam (Raga Lakshanam). Perhaps those distinct prayogas left a mark inside me even though I couldn't understand the underlying notes.

Somewhere after the school years, my interest in Carnatic music got diverted to other forms of music like Hindustani, Ghazals, Western Pop and Country and even film music. I would still listen to a lot of Carnatic music but without a trained ear. After exploring the different genres, somehow in the past 2 decades I have landed back into world of Carnatic Music. When I came back, I found the state of "pins and needles" hadn't changed much for me and so also my untrained ear. This created an urge in me, something like never before to explore the Twosomes and Threesomes of Carnatic Ragas that almost always used to put me on pins and needles when listening to Carnatic music. While we often spend time learning how to SING, we don't usually spend time learning how to LISTEN. Learning to listen not only helps us get out of the pins and needles state but helps one appreciate the difference and similarities in ragas and appreciate the mood, the soul and the essence of each raga and totally gets one into a blissful state with each one of them, into what I call the comfy blanket state. "Learning to listen well helps you sing better" is my message to the younger generation of aspiring singers.

I have to give much credit to my Guru. Smt. Uma Ramasubramaniam, my appa and the many mentors who have held my hand during this journey in the past decade. This is a humble effort to share some of my explorations and research on what I have learnt of the distinguishing notes and how I continue to learn "how to listen".

The Auspicious Vasantha & Lalitha Pair

Between Vasantha and Lalitha the primary distinguisher is the Daivatham (Da). Vasantha has the stronger more powerful - D2 - chatushruti daivatham while Lalitha has the stronger more powerful - D2 - chatushruti daivatham while Lalitha has

a more melodic D1 – Shuddha daivatham. Lalitha has the shuddha rishabham in the Aarohanam while Vasantha doesn't have a Rishabham at all. Therefore if we pay attention to the prayogas, a distinguishable feature is the use of SRGM in Lalitha which is not allowed in Vasantha while Vasantha has a distinct feel because of the prayoga – SMGM.

Lalitha AR - S R1 G3 M1 D1 N3 S AV - S N3 D1 M1 G3 R1 S

Vasantha AR - S M1 G3 M1 D2 N3 S AV - S N3 D2 M1 G3 R1 S

The Beverage Pair - Kaapi and Chai (Desh) as I like to remember it

Kaapi is the south-Indian Degree Kaapi. Desh is the north Indian coffee.

This beverage pair has the same Arohanam - S R2 M1 P N3 S. What I have observed is the Sadharna Gandharam (G2) in Kaapi while Chai (Desh) has Anthara Gandharam (G3). The prayoga MPGR is the one I look for to identify Kaapi and the occasional use of G3 in the prayoga G3MNPGR2.

SNDPMG3 is the Desh prayogam while Kaapi will always have it as S~~N~~D~~N~~P~~M~~G~~2~~R2 in descending prayogas.

Kapi AR - S R2 M1 P N3 S AV - S N2 D2 N2 P M1 G2 R2 S

Desh AR - S R2 M1 P N3 S AV - S N2 D2 P M1 G3 R2 S

The HariKhamboji Janya Pair - Kamas and Naatakuriniji

Kamas and Naatakuriniji both being janya ragas of Harikamboji throws listeners off sometimes. But it is easy to train the ear to pay attention to the typical Vakra prayogas in both these ragas because these are the distinguishing notes.

Look for the MGS, GMNDMGS in prayogas; then it is Naatakuriniji. The absence of the Rishabham in the aarohanam is a characteristic feature of Kamas. Kamas allows SMGM while Naatakuriniji uses SRGM in its ascending notes. And occasionally Kamas allows the use of N3 – Kakali Nishadam, which is not allowed in Naatakuriniji.

Kamas AR - S M1 G3 M1 P D2 N2 S AV - S N2 D2 P M1 G3 R2 S

Naatakuriniji AR - S R2 G3 M1 N2 D2 N2 P D2 N2 S AV - S N2 D2 M1 G3 M1 P G3 R2 S or S N2 D2 M1 G3 S

One of the many Magnificent pairs (Magnificent because of the Madhyamam) —

Keeravani and Simhendramadhyamam

One of the easier pairs to distinguish because both of these are sampoorna ragas with only the Madhyamam being the distinguishing note. Keeravani has the M1 - shuddha Madhyamam while Simhendramadhyamam uses – M2 - Prati Madhyamam (higher frequency than M1). Simply look for the Ma and the prayogas using the variant Madhyamam. As singer, put some emphasis on the Gandharam in Keeravani and make the Ga somewhat subtle in Simhendramadhyamam.

If you hear phrases like PDNGRS or SRSNDP it is almost impossible to tell the difference. So if you are ever on this pin and needle, pay even closer attention and continue the quest to find the Ma the distinguishable note in this magnificent pair.

Keeravani AR - S R2 G2 M1 P D1 N3 S AV - S N3 D1 P M1 G2 R2 S

Simhendramadhyamam AR - S R2 G2 M2 P D1 N3 S AV - S N3 D1 P M2 G2 R2 S

The Romantic Reethigowlai - AnandaBhairavi Duo

These two romantic ragas are woven with the same color yarn (almost same swaras) but they are woven into patterns that are very different. S G2 R2 G2 M1 in the ascending note for both. M1 G2 R2 S in the descending scale. The Signature patterns of Reethigowlai are GMNNS or NDMNNS or SNDMGMNNS or in the lower octave NSGGM. While in Anandabhairavi look for GMPDPS or SNDPM or PMGRS or NSRGM in the lower octave.

Look for the Prayogas with the presence or absence of Panchamam (Pa).

AnandaBhairavi AR - S G2 R2 G2 M1 P D2 P S AV - S N2 D2 P M1 G2 R2 S

Reethigowlai AR - S G2 R2 G2 M1 N2 N2 S AV - S N2 D2 M1 G2 M1 P M1 G2 R2 S

There are many such pairs and it is very interesting exercise to make a connection with things that resonate with us (like the Kapi & Chai example). The examples shared here are not the exhaustive list, but hopefully can help demystify some of the twosomes and threesomes of Carnatic ragas and provide a little insight into what to look for and serve as a quick reference to get out of the Pins and Needles state. These are just a few detailed examples to help identify the distinct prayogas, how to train the ear to find the distinguishing note. I will also leave you with some fun math-like examples of more Carnatic Raga Pairs.

Malayamarutham and Valachi

Malayamarutham minus the Rishabham = Valachi

Arabhi and Shudha Saveri

Arabhi minus Nishadam and Gandharam in the Avarohanam = Shuddha Saveri

Kharaharapriya Janyas - SriRanjani, JayaManohari, Abhogi

Kharaharapriya minus Panchamam = SriRanjani

SriRanjani minus nishadam (in Arohanam only) = Jayamanohari

Jayamanohari minus nishadam (in Avarohanam only) = Abhogi

BRB = Be Right Back = Bowli Revagupti Bhoopalam

Bowli minus Nishadham = Bhoopalam or Revagupti

Revagupti with a lower octave of Gandharam = Bhoopalam

Bhoopalam has Sadharna Gandharam while Bowli and Revagupti have Antara Gadharam

Bowli	AR - S R1 G3 P D1 S	AV - S N3 D1 P G3 R1 S
Bhoopalam	AR - S R1 <u>G2</u> P D1 S	AV - S D1 P <u>G2</u> R1 S
Revagupti	AR - S R1 G3 P D1 S	AV - S D1 P G3 R1 S

With the ocean that Carnatic music is, the pins and needles are endless and my journey continues. Someday I hope to have removed all the pins and needles and settle into a really comfy blanket. Until then, my learning will continue. If you enjoyed this snippet on the Carnatic TWOSOMES and THREESOMES, I invite you to join me on my journey (CarnaticJourney@gmail.com), my journey of learning to identify the distinguishing notes, my journey of "Learning to LISTEN" even better! For Rasika Ears only!!!

GLAC Membership Types

Family membership (2 adults & kids under 18)	Yearly payment of \$160 / family
Extended Family (Family + parents) Excludes other relatives	Yearly payment of \$200 / family
Single Adult	Yearly payment of \$ 85 / person
Visiting Parent from India	Yearly payment of \$ 40 / parent
Full Time Student (not working)	Yearly payment of \$ 50 / person
Senior Citizen	Yearly payment of \$ 75 / person
Life membership (Family + unmarried kids + parents)	One-time payment of \$1500 / family

By supporting GLAC with your membership, you also get free admission to all the GLAC concerts and events including the Indo-American Festival of Performing Arts, Michigan Thyagaraja Aradhana, Navarathri Festival Program and more.

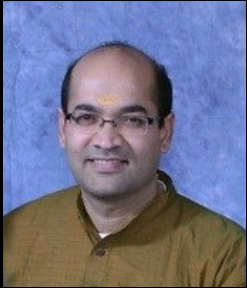
Blast from the Past: GLAC's First Years



Communicating Carnatic Music to the Masses:

The GLAC Approach

Sriram Ganapathy (Canton, MI)



Time sure flies by when you are having fun and it's true with GLAC; of which I have been a part of, for the past five years. 2015 is a momentous year for GLAC in so many ways – it's the 30th year of the organization in existence, it's the 25th year of our famous Navaratri festival, 5th year of SAROVAR festival – the Indo American Festival of Performing Arts and 10th year as a formal non-profit organization.

Did you know that GLAC is one of the largest and oldest organizations of its kind in the USA? We reach over 2700 people with our distribution list and have a global reach of over 1000 followers in the social media circles – many of whom are top artists, organizers and rasikas. In addition, our website gets over 500 unique hits every month and over the past few years; the Sarovar branding has become immensely popular amongst the world music circles. GLAC is the only organization in NA to bring over 30 events under its umbrella (including 10 white labels) last year, ranging from Smt. Sudha Raghunathan to Sri.T.M.Krishna. It is also the only organization in NA to partner with top Universities, Museums, City and State govts for promoting Carnatic Music to the masses. The best part of GLAC is that it is run by team of passionate people bringing you the best North America has to offer and is one of the few North American based organizations which is purely volunteer run where the team works purely on volunteered time and effort.

Our 30th anniversary in 2015 is the next big step in the Michigan music scene with GLAC going main-stream with the Michigan audience. We are beginning partnerships with several local organizations like the Cultural Exchange Network of Detroit (CEN), the Arab American National Museum in Dearborn and The Carr Center of Detroit. These unique partnerships will be part of an effort to build bridges that span racial, cultural and ethnic divisions amongst our communities and strengthening them through music. With these goals in mind, we successfully had our first concert with the Arab American Museum's Public Programming division to embrace all cultural art forms from around the world in a themed event called 'Global Fridays' in Dearborn in May.

Last year, GLAC got the wonderful opportunity to showcase India's art forms as a presentation in front of the Detroit CEN audience, most of who had never heard or exposed to Indian culture. The audience was fascinated by the presentation and had a lot of questions and also wanted to listen to one such concert in their facility. And, as they say, the rest is history. That's how Carnatic Music was introduced to Global Friday's event where people could experience music in an intimate performance setting, up-close-and-personal with pre-concert artist workshops and the after-show artist 'meet and greet' sessions and CD signings with the artists. The whole event was so very well appreciated by the audience who were treated to world music in their own backyard that we are planning a 'Music in the Park' session in August as our next venture.

This was probably the first ever Carnatic event in Michigan, maybe even in the world, where the audience was predominantly non-Indian, Arab and African American, who thoroughly enjoyed the mellifluous music from the bamboo flute wonderfully supplemented by the violin and mridangam. The blissful music not only expanded our audience reach and visibility (advertisements were aired on Detroit & Windsor National Public Radio WDET 101.9 radio station several times a day), but also showed that wholesome music had no language and cultural barriers. Positive parting comments from many of the Arab American listeners as they were leaving the event hall were very heartening including one Palestine American who said that he hadn't heard such a divine concert in the last 60yrs in the USA. There are several other initiatives in the works like introducing Carnatic music to the 'Concert of Colors' in Detroit and also collaborating with local Detroit based non-profit arts associations, to bring Carnatic music to Downtown Detroit and to the African American community at the Campus Martius park this summer.

With GLAC bringing music to the local diaspora, comes the age old question -- can Carnatic music be brought to the masses and more importantly, will the masses enjoy it? The late harikatha exponent Balakrishna Sastrigal mentioned in his Thyagaraja Ramayanam that Carnatic Music is like a polished diamond stone amongst other imitation stones and people need the 'brahma kataksha' to truly understand and appreciate it. Even St Thyagaraja himself sang in his 'Sangitha Gnanamu' kriti that there is no other way to salvation than knowledge of music integrated with unalloyed devotion. So, it boils down to familiarity and exposure to create the knowledge and devotion needed. In fact, familiarity and exposure is what makes people enjoy music and even expert rasikas would agree that listening to familiar raga is more enjoyable than an unfamiliar raga. The exposure part has always been a struggle for many organizations where even though there is no dearth of rasikas, the involvement from the community is needed to keep the organization and the classical tradition alive. Organizations, like GLAC are innovating with different ways to make that happen. And this question is not just relevant to the North American audience, but also back in India where there is an effort for Carnatic music to be identified with the common man, where music is being made accessible to people from the all strata of the society, not just to a niche and erudite audience.

Talking about innovation, Carnatic music has always been through some transformation of sorts and has been adaptive and open to other forms of music right from Muthuswami Dikshitar's days, when he introduced '*fusion music*' by adapting Hindustani ragams and English nottuswarams into his compositions. I'm sure during his time; Dikshitar himself would have been beleaguered for being a non-traditionalist. And about breaking the rules, his own brother, Baluswami Dikshitar caused 'disruptive innovation' by introducing a western instrument, the violin, to the Carnatic platform. And the adaptation and acceptance has been pretty significant. Not only did the basic tuning of the violin changed, changes were made to how it's held, played and the bowing technique, which were totally innovated and a whole new technique now almost indistinguishable from its Western counterpart was perfected to suit Carnatic music. To a point that today, there is no concert without a violin accompaniment. Therein lies the greatness of the Carnatic music to acclimatize to the times. And this has been happening since Muthuswami Dikshitar's time to Mandolin Shrinivas's time today.

Now, when we talk instruments and disruptive innovation in music, you can't but think of Late Shri Mandolin Shrinivas who left us all in vacuity and wanting for more. The mandolin had been used only in Renaissance madrigals playing compositions of Beethoven and Mozart. But it was Shrinivas who breathed new life to this diminutive, almond-shaped instrument by bringing it to Indian classical music and finding new admirers around the world. A child prodigy with a rare combination of knowledge and innovation, he was both traditional, but still extremely creative, with his soft enchanting eyes and an ever smiling face, Shrinivas would captivate audiences of all ages and transformed Carnatic purists who were used to listen to vocalists and were forever moved by his music. He was a trailblazer who not only adapted the mandolin for the Carnatic genre; he gradually bridged all genres on this foreign instrument for his global audiences on world music platforms. He practically invented the mandolin to suit Carnatic music like Dikshitar did to the violin. Who could have imagined that the mandolin would occupy such a prime place on Carnatic platforms today? His command over the instrument, his impeccable laya-gnana, the swara-prathara made the audience bond with his music – the effort which shall be etched in music history forever. GLAC was honored to have hosted His concert during the Sarovar 2013 Festival – during his last tour where he visited only a handful of places in the world.

Now comes the language part. Carnatic music transcends several languages. As one Detroit rasika aptly remarked, Carnatic music touches all South Indian topographies because it has its name from Kannada, compositions in Telugu with the artists and rasikas being Tamil and Malayalam. And with many other compositions from Sanskrit to Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Tamil, there is tremendous diversity in languages and culture within Carnatic music. Today, we have compositions in languages including Hindi, Marathi and even English and Italian. More about that coming up...

Next is the technology and business part. Today's artists and organizers are using their IT and Business degrees to take it Carnatic music further by broadening their possibilities with effective marketing and communication and in carrying music to newer and wider audiences and commanding eclectic and diverse fan followings by bringing in non-traditional listeners. Television reality shows have also rekindled the interest among youth and more importantly their parents, who are eager to see their children performing on stage and on Television. The Internet has further taken music global and music is now more available than ever. Who would have thought of taking online classes via skype from a stalwart or even being his 'virtual friend'? Rasikas can listen to hours of streaming music online or watch the December season concerts via live webcasts or VoD with organizations like icarnatic.org which does a yeoman service to the Carnatic community.

(Continued from page 11...)

Now talking about the money part, the kutcheris of yesteryears were held in the temple premises where the artiste is honored with prasadam -- bananas, coconuts (*thengaimoodi*) and flowers after the concert -- those concerts were actually dubbed 'thengaimoodi kutcheris'! Today, with the traditional Sabha kutcheris and the Corporate Sponsored Festivals where people talk about raising endowment funds worth millions of dollars -- Carnatic music has come a long way. Gone are the days when a great Vidwan like Sri Madurai Mani Iyer had to perform for a thengaimoodi kutcheri at the Ranganathar Temple in Mayavaram which went on until 2am -- with a 'sellout' crowd. Since I always have say a few words about Sri MMI in my article, this thengaimoodi kutcheris was the concert where he changed the face of akaarams forever and introduced new syllables like ooo, ooi and tharalala to his manodharma which was a major variation to the Carnatic music scheme - another disruptive innovation which was ridiculed at first before being recognized and cherished by the audience.

So, the changes by the artists, the changes in the audience and organizers have all brought some radical transformations in the Carnatic music dominion where the performer has to now, also cater to the needs, moods and background of the audience. Recently, when Kum. Shantala Subrahmanyam performed for an Arab audience; she chose ragams like Keeravani and Mohanam which the audience could easily relate to. Also, these days, musicians develop their own little niche within their genre. They introduce a new style with a non-traditional approach to appease the musical palate of the common man to a point where there are several genres within Carnatic music itself with artists catering to several audiences ranging from lite-Carnatic to bhajans to abhangs in Hindi and Marathi to artists singing at the beach with fishermen as the audience and even some artists singing Italian songs in Kalyani at a recent concert in Europe!

Traditionalists might have their own views on this topic, but at the end of the day, we should all agree that it is for the sake of spreading and expanding the reach of Carnatic music for the next generation. With maestros like Mandolin Shrinivas who has already spread the wings of Carnatic music with his immortal mandolin all over the world and organizations like GLAC breaking language and cultural barriers by introducing music to the Arab and African American audience, we can be assured that the best of Carnatic Music is yet to come.

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Unity in Diversity

Shilpa Sadagopan (Pearland, TX)

“Unity in Diversity” is a phrase that I can closely relate to because of my experiences and interests in music. Music has literally been a part and parcel of my life and I can associate it with every memory I cherish, with every learning experience and most of the critical moments of my formative years. Beginning my training as early as three, I have been trained in South Indian Classical Music (Carnatic Music) for over 14 years. The rigor in pitch perfection, complex rhythmic cycles, intricate lyrics, made the progressive learning quite interesting, yet challenging and provided a stretch goal in every step of the way. The sense of satisfaction derived out of a perfect practice, was indescribable, and something that I strived to achieve in most of my activities; while the rush that the creative components of the music offered me was something I could extrapolate to other areas such as language arts. Years of learning and participation in the national conference at Cleveland resulted in solo concert performances in America, India, and on National Indian Television. In 2012, I was awarded the Young Masters award from the Texas Commission of the Arts for my accomplishments in the field of Carnatic music. This ancient music system and the training while living in America sparked my interest in other genres of music that surrounded me on a daily basis. While performing the National Anthem at a local event in Pearland, one of the panel members who picked up on my training in music, recommended that I look into the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts in Houston to gain exposure to various styles of music through rigorous electives for my secondary education. I was lucky to have been selected to attend one of the pioneering high schools for performing arts in the country where I could learn theory and practical aspects of music, including operatic singing and jazz. As a result of profound training in Western classical music singing at my school, I gained a respect and love for Opera, which I had formerly seen as a wilting art form. Artists such as Reneé Fleming and Dietrich Fischer Diskau inspired me, and the perfection in their diction, expression, meticulous dynamics and sensitive vibratos were breath taking. I became determined to explore this genre further and after rigorous practice was fortunate enough to be invited to perform at Carnegie Hall, become a selected member of the Texas All State Choir, and perform as a featured soloist with the Houston Symphony’s production of the “Belle of the Ball”. The cumulative effect of these experiences has led me to be a part of the Houston Grand Opera’s select High School Voice Studio. In addition to Opera, I took a liking to jazz after being introduced to Billie Holiday and Ella Fitzgerald by senior students at my school. After listening and collaborating with my peers, I was nominated by my school as the vocalist to represent Houston at the Norway/Stavanger cultural exchange program’s Jazz festival in 2014. In addition, I also have a keen interest in pop music because of its omnipresence and global reach. Since our school only offered training in classical music I founded HSPVA’s Glee Club as an outlet for students to explore pop music. I am also very passionate about composing and producing my own songs in pop music, as it is a great channel for emotional expression, in times of extreme anxiety and stress while in high school. These various genres of music paired with my background in Indian classical music led me to subconsciously compare these various styles, giving me a broad minded outlook on music and its far reaching impacts. Junior Year, I spearheaded the idea to raise awareness of ancient art forms by introducing Carnatic Music into my school’s curriculum. I taught a class on Carnatic Music, discussing its similarities with American folk song “My country tis of thee”, Jazz standard “How Deep is the Ocean” and Justin Timberlake’s “What Goes Around”. Highlighting these similarities allowed students to see music as a globally transcending art form. This culminated in the presentation of the Indian piece “Desh Thillana” at our Spring Concert of 2014. One of the most eye opening experiences was speaking at the TedxYouth@Houston 2014 conference on the topic “Music as a Universal Language”. Here I was able to discuss the global impact of music on society and its unique role as a boundary transcendent art form. This talk truly consolidated my ideas about music on a global sphere. The idea of globalizing the world through music and exploring various genres of music really appeals to me, and I believe there truly is “Unity in Diversity”. Thomas Friedman, author of “The World is Flat” had said that “the world was becoming increasingly flattened due to globalization of commerce”, however I see that the world has already become flattened through music. Although there are various genres, the fundamental traits of music as a source of entertainment and emotional relief allow us to welcome diversity and appreciate different cultures and styles, focusing on the similarities between genres and appreciating the differences, thus breaking economic and societal barriers. My passion to explore and unravel all of the hidden magnanimities of music have just begun, and I look forward to continuing to delve into my interests at the University of Pennsylvania next fall. I am truly thankful for this art form as it has not only provided me with a limitless passion but has also provided me with a constant reminder to never stop learning and growing as an intellectual and artist.



Carnatic Music Trivia

Akshaya Rajkumar (Auburn Hills, MI)

- When was the earliest known song written?**
 - 1200 years ago
 - 3400 years ago
 - 5500 years ago
 - 9800 years ago
 - Before civilization
- What is the origin of the word Carnatic?**
 - Karnataka, a style of dance
 - Karnataka, another name for India
 - karu nadu, land of black soil
 - The Hindu deity of music
 - After the founder of Carnatic music
- What is the oldest sabha in South India?**
 - Madras Music Academy
 - Krishna Gana Sabha
 - Egmore Sangeetha Sabha
 - Narada Gana Sabha
 - Sri Parthasarathy Swami Sabha
- When did Hindustani and Carnatic music separate?**
 - 5th century AD
 - 12th century AD
 - 18th century AD
 - Before common era (BCE)
 - none of the above
- Before sabhas, where were concerts performed?**
 - open fields
 - at the homes of artists
 - at the homes of common people
 - royal courts
 - were no concerts
- Who was the first to receive the Sangita Kalanidhi title?**
 - M.S. Subbulakshmi
 - Harikeshanallur Muthiah Bhagavatar
- Seetharamayya sang what raga for eight straight days?**
 - Begada
 - Kalyani
 - Thilang
 - Thodi
 - Amritavarshini
- The currently used scheme of 72 Melakartas was created by**
 - Thyagaraja
 - MuthuswamiDikshitar
 - Govindaacharya
 - Venkatamakhi
 - Sambamoorthy
- Who was first to compose in the raga chintaamani?**
 - Shyama Shastri
 - Swaati ThirunaaL
 - AanDaaL
 - Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer
 - Papanasam Sivan
- Begada was a specialty of which composer?**
 - Patnam Subramania Iyer
 - Veenai Kuppaiyyar
 - Annamaacharya
 - Badraachala Ramadas
 - Kanakadaasa
- The closest Western equivalent of the raga is the**
 - scale
 - mode
 - key
 - octave
 - melody

12. **Hindustani Girija is closest to what Carnatic raga?**

- Shankarabharanam
- Hindolam
- Vasantha
- Madhuvanathi
- Yamuna Kalyani

13. **Which of the following materials has NOT been used to make a nadaswaram?**

- metal
- wood
- ivory
- glass
- stone

14. **At which temple are there musical pillars which sound when struck?**

- Shreerangam
- Madurai Meenaakshi
- Thanumalayan (Kanyakumari)
- Ramappa
- all of these

15. **Mahadeva Nattuvanar introduced what Western instrument in the 19th century?**

- violin
- harmonium
- clarinet
- tambura
- mandolin

16. **Who was the first woman to be awarded the Sangeetha Kalanidhi title?**

- D.K. Pattammal
- M.S. Subbulakshmi
- M.L. Vasanthakumaari
- T. Brinda
- Veena Dhanam

17. **Who is NOT a member of the female Trinity?**

- M.S. Subbulakshmi
- M.L. Vasantakumaari
- D.K. Pattammal
- T. Brinda

18. **How many women have received the Sangetha Kalanidhi award?**

- 1
- 4
- 6
- 7
- 10

19. **D.K. Pattammal was the first to introduce what to the Carnatic concert format?**

- Aalapana
- Ragam Tanam Pallavi
- Varnam
- Niraval
- Tukkadas

20. **How many types of talas (not including laghu variations) are acknowledged in the traditional tala system?**

- 7
- 35
- 108
- 1008
- infinite

21. **The longest tala, with 128 beats (and 18 angas) is called**

- sarabhanandana
- simhanandana
- shatpitaputrika
- charchaari
- kaarika

22. **Shyama Shastri composed a complicated pallavi in which tala?**

- sarabhanandana
- simhanandana
- shatpitaputrika
- charchaari
- kaarika

(Answers available on page 17)

Dimensions of Enjoyment: Music, Dance, Drama, Discourses & Lectures

Gopal Venkataraman (Las Vegas, NV)



Why do people love to flock to these Music season performances every December in Chennai in South India, the annual Cleveland Thyagaraja Aradhana in Cleveland, USA and numerous other such locations, worldwide - be it vocal, instrumental, dance performances, stage plays, musical discourses or lecture demonstrations? Just that it appeals to people with varying knowledge, interest and perception levels at varying dimensions and for several other valid reasons. The impact a performance creates is perceived at different levels based on the listeners' passion, interest, exposure, experience and expertise in that particular field of the art form.

The performances at the music festivals in Chennai, Cleveland and elsewhere can be broadly categorized under Music, Dance, Drama, Discourses and Lecture Demonstrations. There are several groups of people that wish to witness a few, many or all of the performances that come under these categories of the art forms based on their enjoyment and enlightenment criteria. Under the music category, vocal music seems to score relatively higher in popularity when compared with instrumental music performances.

Vocal Music performance, which is the most commonly enjoyed version of performing arts in the music festivals, is enjoyed by *rasikas* for the inherent features that it offers. Besides the intricacies of audio elements pertaining to the quality of the sound that is being heard, the inherent basic elements of vocal music are usually based on how it is presented on stage and what the audience hears – the content, while at these concerts. How it is presented solely depends on the caliber of the performer and his or her expertise in presenting it. The basic elements of vocal music content are highlighted by what the original composer had included in his work which can be classified under:

1. the lyrical element (grammar, choice of words, phrases, rhymes, meter),
2. the musical element – *shruti* (tone), *laya* (rhythm), melody (tune) ,
3. the emotional element - *bhAva* - predominantly *bhakti rasam* (devotional element) in Carnatic Classical music among others.

Vocal music performances, either solo or duet greatly attract the audience based on the above features and the unique impression that the performer has on his or her listeners.

Instrumental Music, either solo, duo or trio can be broadly classified under string instruments like violin, viola, veena, mandolin, sitar, santoor etc. and wind instruments like nadhaswaram, flute, clarinet, saxophone, etc. provide all the musical goodness of a vocal performance sans the lyrical and vocal contents, which are implicit. Thus, an instrumental music performance should strive to make up for the lack of vocal element in order to appeal to the audience that has a preference to vocal music. On the other hand, instrumental music is capable of transcending language boundaries and still attract audiences from all over.

Classical Dance recitals are embedded with either live or recorded vocal music in addition to other accompanying instruments. So inherently, they have all the attributes of vocal and instrumental music in addition to the visual element and the elevated emotional content that it brings in front of one's eyes. With the combined features of audio and visual elements, a dance recital offers many more dimensions to enjoy than even vocal music with all its built-in features.

Lecture demonstrations provide the description, interpretation, analyses and commentaries on existing works in literature,

music, dance and the like. Lecture demonstrations are popular among students, teachers and general public that can gain insight into the specific topic dealt in the lecture and be able to exchange views on specific topics. A lecture demonstration on dance actually consists of all the elements of the visual and audio media in addition to the thought provoking intellectual element.

Devotional musical discourses which are becoming very popular nowadays during the season predominantly elaborate on the religious, cultural and philosophical interpretations of mythology and history. These are popular especially with older genre of people who are generally inclined towards such presentations.

Stage plays or “dramas” as they are popularly known, predominantly offer the humor element built into a theatrical setting. There are some serious ones that manage to pass a subtle message or two that might point out some real life scenario or other thought stimulating concepts. Usually the musical element is missing in these stage plays since they concentrate more on the screenplay and conversations between individuals. People throng to see stage plays based on their favorite performer and/or group to enjoy the humor or serious content presented in these plays.

Aside from what these live performances commonly offer, there are other reasons why people frequent these programs which might include seeing their favorite performer, his or her voice and unique style, the items that they perform, the compositions and the language of the items they perform, free versus ticketed programs etc., while there are other social reasons like getting to see their friends and family members at the concert venue which play a vital part on why people go for these live performances. Certain cliques of concert goers even consider going to these as a symbol of status and being a part of a special social network.

Whether the *rasikas* analyze all the above reasons before going to a performance or not, the concert venues are seen to be filling up to the brim during every music season and most of it could be attributed to the attraction created by Indian Classical music and the performance of other art forms, which seem to be well on its way to flourish well in the 21st century and beyond, without a doubt.

Carnatic Music Trivia : Answers

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. 3400 years ago | 6. M.S. Ramaswamy Iyer | 12. Vasantha | 18. 10 |
| 2. Karu nadu, land of black soil | 7. Thodi | 13. glass | 19. Ragam Tanam Pallavi |
| 3. Sri Parthasarthy Swami Sabha | 8. Venkatamakhi | 14. all of these | 20. 108 |
| 4. 12th century AD | 9. Shyama Shastri | 15. clarinet | 21. simhanandana |
| 5. royal courts | 10. Patnam Subramania Iyer | 16. M.S. Subbulakshmi | 22. sarabhanandana |
| | 11. mode | 17. T. Brinda | |

With best wishes from...



Highlights of Sarovar 2015



Flute Concert by Smt. Shantala Subramanyam



Harikatha by Sri T.N. Seshagopalan



Vocal Concert by Sri Sanjay Subrahmanyam

From the Editor



Dear Readers,

Greetings! I had the pleasant task of serving as the editor of the Sarovar Festival Souvenir this year. I would like to thank Mr. Sankar Krishnan and my fellow team members for this wonderful opportunity. I would also like to extend my grateful thanks to all the writers for their invaluable contributions to the Souvenir and to my family & friends for all their support in my humble endeavor.

Enjoy Sarovar 2015, and looking forward to your continued support & patronage.

Musically yours,
Ganga Rajkumar



Brochure Design: Akshaya Rajkumar



Sri U. Srinivas



Sri Adyar K. Lakshman



Smt. Suguna Purushothaman

*Our humble homage to the Indian Music and
Dance Legends who passed away in 2014-2015 and
left a big void in the arts world.*

*Thank you to all of our
supporters for their
continued commitment to
GLAC.*



*These past 30 years would
not have been possible
without you!*

Thank You