

THANK YOU

Sydney music circle thanks the artists of this evening:

Ramnath & Gopinath Iyer - Veena

Sridhar Chari - Mridangam

(Please visit our website for the Artist's profiles)

Sydney music circle thanks music lovers who have generously donated their time and resources for the forum's achievements. We request you to continue supporting us.

Sponsors contribute \$40 towards hall rental costs. Please contact us to sponsor a future program.

Sponsor for this month's Program

- Mrs. Raji Subramaniam
- Mrs. Kala & Mr. Balaji
- Mr & Mrs. Paddy

We would love to hear from you regarding various aspects of music, which can be published in our monthly newsletter "Gyan". We would like to emphasize that the main objective of Gyan is to facilitate broader involvement of the community and to enable awareness about the various aspects of music.

PRASHNA

1. Name some of the varieties of veena
2. Queen of the Above?
3. Dikshitar, in which composition refers to Rama as enjoying Narada's veena?
4. Specificity of Dikshitar's composition "Bharathi" in Devamanohari
5. What are the 4 main Saraswathi Banis?

Answers will be given at the end of the September program.

SMC WELCOMES YOU

FOR THE "NAVAVARNAM" SPECIAL CONCERT

"Navavaraganaga Dhyanyogajaptaparasike"

@

Dundas Community Centre
Sturt Street, Telopea

On 29th October 2005
6.00 - 9.00 Pm

CHITRA KRISHNAMOORTHI
GANGA KASINARAYANAN
KALA SHARMA
MYTHILI MALLIKESHWAR
NAMRATHA PULAPAKA
PAVALAN VIKRAMAN
PREMA ANANTHAKRISHNAN
RANJANI IYER
SUBHA HARINATH
SRUTI BALAJI
UMA AYYAR

BALAJI JAGANNADHAN - VIOLIN
GIRIDHAR TIRUMALAI - FLUTE
SRIDHARAN - MRIDANGAM
BALA SHANKAR - MRIDANGAM



SYDNEY MUSIC CIRCLE



SEPTEMBER 2005

"Sarigamapadani rathaam tham veena
sankraantha kaantha hastaanthaam"

"Veenavenu vinotha mandithakara veerasanaa
samsthithaa"

Gowri & Sriram (97998920)
Gayatri & Bharat (93145304)

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Visit us at www.smc.does.it

ABOUT THE AUGUST CONCERT

Divya Subramaniam has a clear and a sweet voice. She started with a beautiful Kalyani varnam. And then she took up to explore briefly, the tonal beauty of the ragam Sankarabaranam and Veena Kuppayar's composition 'Baghu Meera' followed by short and brisk kalpana swaras. It was an enjoyable concert which she finished with the 'Dhanasri thillana'. Excellent support was provided by Mohan Ayyar (Synthesiser) and Bala Shankar on the mridangam.

The Thodi Varnam marked a brisk opening of Sruti Balaji's concert. She has excellent voice control which was nicely showcased as she sang the Thodi alapana. Then after a couple of songs she took up to explore the special composition of the evening "Mela Ragamalika".

Her akarras with spiralling brighas emerged attractively. She gave a brilliant exposition of the 72 Mela Ragamalika, bringing out the full grandeur and harmonic and lyrical beauty of the composition. The highlight of the evening was the standing ovation given by the rasikas, proving that Sruti has the talent to become an accomplished artist by virtue of her own merits. Balaji Jagannadan and Raghuram gave great support on the violin and mridangam respectively.

VEENA: THE DIVINE INSTRUMENT

Veena is one of the three celestial musical instruments, having references from Vedic. The fact that Saraswathi, the Goddess of arts, is always identified with Veena only symbolises that Music has primary importance among all forms of fine arts. Sage Narada, who is believed to have blessed St. Thyagaraja with his treatise on Sangeetha Shastra (St. Thyagaraja has acknowledged the Teacher status of Narada by Guruswamy) was himself an exponent in Veena and played one called Mahathi. It is interesting to note that the scriptures and puranas have called Veena by various names. Saraswathi's Veena has been referred to by names like Vipanchee, Vatchabee, and Vallakee etc. Vishvasu's Veena has been called as Bruhathi and tumburu's as Kalavathi. An incident that happened in as recent as the beginning of 19th century proves how much of a divine sanction Veena has. Muthuswamy Dikshitar of the music Trinity, on completion of his training with chidambaranatha Yogi, was told to go and pray on the Ganges and ask for what he wished. When Dikshitar did the same, wishing for a Veena, a celestial Veena descended on his hands from nowhere! The said Veena, which was unique with the Yali, turned upwards and the words Shri Ram in Sanskrit inscribed, is still available with the family descendants of Dikshitar. Hence, not surprisingly, many of his compositions have references to Veena. Talking of legends, one very important personality who needs mention is Guru Raghavendra of Manthralaya who was an unparalleled exponent of Veena. There is a story that he sang his own Bhairavi composition "Indhu enake Govinda, playing Veena, just before entering Brindavana, for which song, his Golden Santhana Gopala Moorthi Vighraha came alive and danced, in full public view. And this happened not in any puranic time; just about 300 years back (1671 A.D). What we have seen are but a few glimpses on divine references of this Pracheena music instrument, which is a precious part of the priceless heritage of India. We are fortunate that there are people to preserve this instrument's glory by practising carnatic music on it. We, as rasikas, should, when possible, go that extra mile to do what we can, to encourage artists of this great, truly divine vadyam.

(Contributed by Gayatri Bharat)

GYAN - SEPTEMBER 2005

FORMAT OF CARNATIC CONCERTS

The carnatic music world has seen many stalwarts over the years and many of them have left their strong impression(s) or mark on today's concerts style and format. They will be well remembered while one listens to a concert whether it is in India or elsewhere on this planet. One person who strongly comes to our mind is Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar who has been responsible for perfecting today's format.

Ramanuja Iyengar in an article to a symposium in the 50s said that he never begun a concert without singing a varnam at the beginning. He says that a varnam imparts mellowness to the voice and flavour to subsequent rendering of kritis or ragas. Further he reckons that the pieces selected should be of varied talas and no two of the same tala need be sung consecutively. In rendering kalpanaswarams, for kritis or pallavis, it would be proper to adopt traditional mode of sarvalaghu pattern with variations in the nadai and tala imparting ranjakatva, keeping in view the raga-swarupa. A mixture of slow and fast tempo pieces alternately will make the concert more interesting. The main raga for a major piece and tana/pallavi should be selected from a familiar one for the audience and the rendering of the raga alapana must be lengthy and in great detail and explore the intricacies of the raga.

However, the present trend seems to be that if the artist chooses to render the main piece in elaborate fashion, he/she chooses the RTP fairly short. I am not certain here whether it is the listener's patience or the artist's own choosing or the combination of both. Whatever may be the case, the format chosen and perfected by Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar fifty odd years ago remain in tact and I am sure will continue to be for some more years to come.

(Contributed by Narayanan Sampath)