IFAASD

9th Annual Youth Festival of North America



A Legacy of Artistry: The History and Mission of IFAASD

By Revathi Subramanian, President



Dear performing arts lovers of San Diego,

The Indian Fine Arts Academy of San Diego (IFAASD) is excited and proud to present our 9th Annual Youth Festival, a vibrant four-day celebration this year spotlighting the next generation of classical Indian musicians and dancers from across North America.

The Youth Festival of North America is built around two goals: nurturing young talent and celebrating our heritage. It offers a dedicated platform for performers under the age of 30, and this year's lineup showcases a rich range of disciplines: Carnatic vocal, instrumental music, and classical dance forms including Bharatanatyam and Kathak. This year, we are honored to feature 4 special featured events. On Friday, September 4th, 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM, The Cup O' Carnatic Show brings together the incomparable Dr. Jayanthi Kumaresh, joined by Pramath Kiran on Tabla and Morching, KU Jayachandra Rao on Mridangam, and Keerthi Kumar shaping the visual experience with Graphics and Lights. This featured event promises a rich, immersive evening of storytelling, rhythm, melody, and artistry. On Saturday, September 5th, 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM, we feature "A Thousand Years' Journey" an original Bharatanatyam dance-theater ensemble production conceived and choreographed by Shri. Ganesh Vasudeva. Told from the voice of a 1,000-year-old bronze Nataraja from southern Tamil Nadu, the production traces the idol's extraordinary passage across time and space. On Sunday, September 6th, 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM, Sangeetha Kathamrutham brings us a Harikatha, a centuries-old South Indian storytelling tradition that weaves together classical music, devotional narrative, Sanskrit and vernacular verse, philosophy, and humor. This is presented by Shri. Kalyanapuram S. Aravind, joined by S. Venkataraman on Harmonium, and S. Krishna on Ghatam. Lastly, on Sunday, September 6th, 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM, we feature "Echoes of Flute", a centenary tribute to the master of carnatic flute T.R. Mahalingam. This is presented by Flute J.A. Jayant, joined by N.C. Bharadwaj on Mridangam, and N. Rajaraman on Ghatam.

We're opening this year's festival to the entire community of art lovers, and we invite families and local patrons to come support our budding artists. Only our Friday night event "The Cup O' Carnatic Show" is ticketed for non-IFAASD subscribers, however all other events are free for all. Join us in celebrating our rich Indian performing arts heritage through immersive, collaborative performances and special guest showcases. And we extend our deepest gratitude to the Gurus, whose dedication ensures these timeless artistic traditions continue to reach young people growing up far from home.

IFAASD's mission rests on three pillars:

- *Cultural Preservation* — Preserving, promoting, and sustaining the magnificent heritage of Indian classical music, dance, and arts across the greater San Diego community.
- *Bridging Generations* — Nurturing local talent and fostering a deep appreciation for Indian classical culture among younger generations growing up across North America.
- *Charitable Purpose* — As an IRS-certified 501(c)(3) nonprofit, we use the arts as a platform to support health, education, and charitable initiatives around the world.

Our History and Evolution

IFAASD was founded in 2007 by a dedicated group of local music teachers, artists, and patrons who saw a growing demand for classical Indian arts in San Diego. What began as intimate, hundred-person gatherings has grown into a cornerstone cultural institution — one that has hosted legends including Sangeetha Kalanidhi awardees and Grammy winners.

Today, our reach extends well beyond San Diego. Our signature spring festival has grown into the world's second-largest Indian performing arts festival outside of India, and our annual Fall Youth Festival provides a top-tier platform for young artists across the continent. This year, our Youth Festival brings together 50+ students from 8 different local dance schools and 27 young performers from a pool of over 100+ applicants across North America.

Patron Subscriptions

Our community's generosity fuels our year-round cultural programming. An annual subscription provides vital support to both international and local artists, while offering exclusive benefits:

- *Complimentary Access* — Free entry to our seasonal concerts and major multi-day festivals.
- *Digital Archives* — Streaming access to select past concerts directly through the IFAASD mobile app.
- *Educational Impact* — Support for academic lecture-demonstrations and specialized musicology workshops.
- *Legendary Artists on Our Stages* — Over the years, IFAASD has become a premier cultural bridge, hosting Padma Bhushan, Padma Shri, and Sangeetha Kalanidhi awardees alongside Grammy-winning legends.

Volunteerism: The Heart of IFAASD

As a nonprofit, IFAASD runs entirely on the energy and passion of our community. We welcome every level of time commitment, and all student and corporate volunteer hours are fully trackable. Patrons can make a meaningful impact through several volunteer tracks:

- *Artist Hospitality* — Host visiting maestros from around the United States, and India, coordinate local lodging, or provide artist transportation.
- *Concert Operations* — Assist behind the scenes with lighting, sound checks, ticketing, or the festival food experience.
- *Community Relations* — Help with community announcements, coordinate student showcase lineups, or support digital updates.

None of this — not the festival, not the stage, not the standing ovations our young artists so richly deserve — happens without you. Whether you join us as a subscriber, a donor, a volunteer, or simply a proud member of the audience, you become part of the story we are writing together: one that honors where we come from and invests boldly in where our children are headed. Thank you for your support of IFAASD.

With Gratitude,

Revathi Subramanian

President



Indian Fine Arts Academy of San Diego Presents

9TH ANNUAL

YOUTH FESTIVAL OF NORTH AMERICA

SEPTEMBER 3-6, 2026

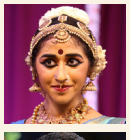















DAY 1 THURSDAY Sep 3, 2026		6:00 - 6:15 PM	Lighting of the Lamp, Prayer, and Festival Opening	
	EVENT 1	6:15 - 7:15 PM	Bharatanatyam	Shalini Sachidhanand
		7:15 - 8:00 PM	DINNER BREAK	
	EVENT 2	8:00 - 9:30 PM	KathaaVali - Stories that Dance: Presentations from Local Dance Schools in the San Diego Region	Aavartan Dance Academy, Abinaya Arts Academy, Archana School of Dance, Center for World Music, Natesha School of Bharatanatyam, Sri Sharada Kalalayam, Swapanthi Dance Academy, Tej Dance Studio
DAY 2 FRIDAY Sep 4, 2026	EVENT 3	6:00 - 7:00 PM	Carnatic Vocal	Nachikethan Vivek Srinivasan - Vocal, Lavanya Karthikeyan - Violin, Vamsi Krishna Sai Maganti - Mridangam
		7:00 - 7:30 PM	DINNER BREAK	
	EVENT 4	7:30 - 9:30 PM	Featured Event: "The Cup 'o Carnatic Show"	Dr. Jayanthi Kumaresh - Veena, K.U. Jayachandra Rao - Mridangam, Pramath Kiran - Tabla and Morching, Keerthi Kumar - Graphics and Lights
DAY 3 SATURDAY Sep 5, 2026	EVENT 5	8:00 - 9:00 AM	Carnatic Vocal	Shreyas Reddy - Vocal, Lavanya Karthikeyan - Violin, Anirudh Suresh - Mridangam
	EVENT 6	9:15 - 10:15 AM	Carnatic Vocal	Tejasvi Ganesh Subramanya - Vocal, Ram Sivaraman - Violin, Vamsi Krishna Sai Maganti - Mridangam
	EVENT 7	10:30 - 11:30 AM	Carnatic Violin Solo	Tejas Murali - Violin, Arnav Sudarshan - Mridangam
	EVENT 8	11:45 - 12:45 PM	Carnatic Vocal	Shivaani Seshu Komanduri - Vocal, Vignesh Nydhruva - Violin, Rahul Musti - Mridangam
		12:45 - 1:30 PM	LUNCH BREAK	
	EVENT 9	1:30 - 2:00 PM	Percussion Solo	Arjun Prasad - Tabla supported by Srijan Chakraborty (Harmonium)
	EVENT 10	2:15 - 3:15 PM	Carnatic Vocal	Aadhya Sridharan - Vocal, Vignesh Nydhruva - Violin, Aashrith Aravind - Mridangam
		3:15 - 3:30 PM	TEA/COFFEE BREAK	
	EVENT 11	3:30 - 4:30 PM	Kathak	Reva Srivastava
	EVENT 12	4:45 - 5:45 PM	Bharatanatyam	Prerna Shrivathsan
	EVENT 13	6:00 - 7:00 PM	Bharatanatyam	Dhanya Pragaspathy
		7:00 - 7:30 PM	DINNER BREAK	
	EVENT 14	7:30 - 9:00 PM	Featured Event: "A Thousand Years' Journey" Dance Production	Script and Choreography: Ganesh Vasudeva Music composition: Snigdha Venkataramani Dancers: Nitya Narasimhan, Surya Ravi, Priyanka Chary, Mrinalini Raghavendiran, Vidyuth Pasumarthi.
DAY 4 SUNDAY Sep 6, 2026	EVENT 15	8:00 - 9:00 AM	Carnatic Vocal	Krishna Velamoor Arun - Vocal, Ram Sivaraman - Violin, Arnav Sudarshan - Mridangam
	EVENT 16	9:00 - 10:00 AM	Carnatic Vocal	Malini Iyer - Vocal, Prahlad Saravanapriyan - Violin, Rahul Musti - Mridangam
		10:00 - 10:15 AM	TEA/COFFEE BREAK	
	EVENT 17	10:30 - 12:30 PM	Featured Event: "Sangeetha Kathamrutham"	Kalyanapuram S. Aravind - Vocal, S. Venkataraman - Harmonium, S. Krishna - Ghatam
		12:30 - 1:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK	
	EVENT 18	1:00 - 2:00 PM	Bharatanatyam	Neha Asuri
	EVENT 19	2:15 - 3:15 PM	Bharatanatyam	Sharanya Balaji
		3:15 - 3:30 PM	TEA/COFFEE BREAK	
	EVENT 20	3:30 - 4:30 PM	Carnatic Vocal	Sinthu Sivaraman - Vocal, Tejas Murali - Violin, Anirudh Suresh - Mridangam
	EVENT 21	4:45 - 5:45 PM	Carnatic Vocal Duet	Surya & Sathya Ganesan - Vocal Duet, Nivik Sanjay Bharadwaj - Violin, Aashrith Aravind - Mridangam
		5:45 - 6:30 PM	DINNER BREAK	
	EVENT 22	6:30 - 8:15 PM	Featured Event: "Echoes of Flute"	Flute J.A. Jayant - Flute, N.C. Bharadwaj - Mridangam, N. Rajaraman - Ghatam
		8:15 - 8:30 PM	Thank you and Festival Closing	

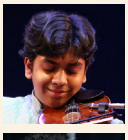


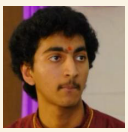













All events are FREE to the entire community except The Cup O' Carnatic Show, which is ticketed for non-subscribers of IFAASD

INDIAN FINE ARTS ACADEMY OF SAN DIEGO

Presents

KathaaVali - Stories that Dance

A Presentation by Dance Schools in the San Diego Region

Dance Schools Represented



Guru Gargi Chattopadhyaya

Aavartan Dance Academy





Guru Aler Krishnan

Abinaya Arts Academy





Guru Aarthi Narain

Archana School of Dance





Guru Shibani Patnaik

Center for World Music





Guru Suman Nayak

Natesha School of Bharatanatyam





Guru Srimeenakshi Srinivasan

Sri Sharada Kalalayam





Guru Aparna Sundaram Kaushik

Swapanthi Dance Academy





Guru Sufi Raina

Tej Dance Studio



FREE for the entire community

September 3, 2026 Thursday

Time: 8:00 PM

Part of the

9th Annual Youth Festival

IFAASD
INDIAN FINE ARTS ACADEMY
SAN DIEGO
http://www.indianfinearts.org

INDIAN FINE ARTS ACADEMY OF SAN DIEGO

Presents

The Cup O' Carnatic Show

with Dr. Jayanthi Kumaresh



along with Pramath Kiran *Tabla & Morching,*
KU Jayachandra Rao *Mridangam* & Keerthi Kumar *Graphics & Lights*

Sponsors: Shri. Balu Masti in memory of Smt. N.S Saraswathi, and T.A.L.A

Friday, September 4th, 2026 at 7:30 PM

Location :

David and Dorothea Garfield Theater, Jewish Community Center, 4126 Executive Dr, La Jolla, CA 92037

Free for 2026 IFAASD Subscribers | Ticket : $40 for Others

IFAASD
Indian Fine Arts Academy
San Diego
http://www.indianfinearts.org

Indian Fine Arts Academy of San Diego presents

A Thousand Years' Journey

Dance Production by Ganesh Vasudeva and Team

Script and Choreography: Ganesh Vasudeva

Music composition: Snigdha Venkataramani



Dancers:

Nitya Narasimhan, Surya Ravi, Priyanka Chary,
Mrinalini Raghavendiran, Vidyuth Pasumarthi.

Sponsored by Archana School of Dance

Saturday, September 5, 2026 at 7:30 PM

Location :

David and Dorothea Garfield Theater, Jewish Community Center, 4126 Executive Dr, La Jolla, CA 92037

FREE for the entire community

IFAASD
Indian Fine Arts Academy
SAN DIEGO
http://www.indianfinearts.org

Indian Fine Arts Academy of San Diego presents

Echoes of Flute



NC Bharadwaj

FLUTE J.A. JAYANT

Flute Support – B.Sreeram (Disciple of Flute J.A.JAYANT)

N. Rajaraman

Sunday, September 06, 2026 at 6:30 PM

Location :

David and Dorothea Garfield Theater, Jewish Community Center, 4126 Executive Dr, La Jolla, CA 92037

FREE for the entire community

IFAASD
Indian Fine Arts Academy
SAN DIEGO

INDIAN FINE ARTS ACADEMY OF SAN DIEGO

Presents

Sangeetha Kathamrutham

Kalyanapuram S. Aravind (Vocal)

S. Venkataraman (Harmonium), S. Krishna (Ghatam)



Sponsored by Revathi and Suresh Subramanian

Sunday, September 06, 2026 at 10:30 AM

Location :

David and Dorothea Garfield Theater, Jewish Community Center, 4126 Executive Dr, La Jolla, CA 92037

FREE for the entire community

FEATURED ARTISTS

N C Bharadwaj - Mridangam Artiste

N C Bharadwaj started learning mridangam at the tender age of 6. He had his initial training under Srivanjeyam K Gopalan and further with Nanganallur Sri R Sriram. He then had his advanced training under Padma Vibushan Sangeetha Kalanidhi Mridangam Legend Dr.Umayalpuram K Sivaraman.

Bharadwaj is an A Graded artiste of All India Radio, Chennai. He is a recepient of numerous awards and titles such as

1) Guru Karaikudi Mani Memorial Award from Karthik Fine Arts
2) Vani Kala Nipuna Title from Sri Thyaga Brahma Gana sabha, Vani Mahal
3) Kalki Krishnamurthy Award from Kalki Krishnamurthy Trust
4) Yuva Kala Bharathi from Bharat Kalachar
5) Best Mridangam Artiste award from Madras Music Academy, etc.

to name a few. He has been regularly performing for all the senior and upcoming artistes all over India and abroad. He has toured Canada, US, Dubai, Abu Dhabhi, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Mayasia, etc. to name a few.

Ganesh Vasudeva

Ganesh is a Bharatanatyam dancer, and choreographer from San Francisco. He's currently training in Abhinaya under Nritya Kalanidhi Bragha Bessell. His productions — Life of Pi, Boys Don't Dance, Conversations with Cupid, A Thousand Years' Journey — have been acclaimed for blending classical rigor with contemporary themes.

K.U. Jayachandra Rao

K. U. Jayachandra Rao is a globally acclaimed Mridangam virtuoso, known for his rare style that weaves rhythm into melody. Trained by legends Trichur E. P. Narayan Pisharady and Palghat T. R. Rajamani, he has performed in over 20 countries and collaborated internationally with artists like Dillon Fowler, Peter Stacey, Andrew Weichman, and Rajesh Mehta.

His global performances include Beches Indian Brew, First Line-Celtic Music, the Rümlingen Music Festival (Switzerland), Poland Drum Festival, Rainforest World Music Festival, and the Scotland Music Festival. He is a core member of Layatharanga, a celebrated contemporary classical/world-music ensemble based in Bengaluru. With over 3 decades of experience he is greatly respected for his technical mastery and musical intuition

J.A. Jayant

Carnatic Flute exponent J.A.Jayant, is an artiste, collaborator, teacher and composer performing across the globe and popularizing the art of flute playing. A prodigy - having started performing at the age of 7, Flute J.A.Jayant is a young musician of national and international repute with over 50 international tours and 2000 solo concerts/jugalbandhi performances to his credit.

A global ambassador of Indian Music, Jayant has performed and enthralled audiences at various prestigious organizations and festivals in India and around the world including Theatre de la ville- Paris, Copenhagen Jazz Festival, FEZ Festival - Morocco, Les Orientales d'anjou festival, Sodra Teatern - Sweden, The Darbar festival - UK, Milapfest - UK, Sydney Music Festival, World Sacred Spirit Festival, DUCTAC and QE2 in Dubai, Kennedy Center - Washington DC, SIRI FORT- New Delhi, Cleveland Thyagaraja Festival, Reitberg Museum- Zurich, The Madras Music Academy, Shanmukhananda hall, Sangeet Natak Akademi, ICCR to name a few. He has performed in USA, Canada, Sri Lanka, Singapore, France, Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Switzerland, Sweden, Re-Union islands, Mauritius, Australia, UK, Scotland, Norway, Dubai, Kuwait.

Jayant is also one of the youngest musicians to represent Carnatic music at numerous major international festivals across Europe.

He was invited to perform as a soloist along with the Paris Symphony Orchestra at the Louis Vitton Men's Fashion Show 2026 at The Centre Pompidou and also at the Giambattistavalli Paris Haute Couture.

Flute J.A.Jayant is regarded as one of the most popular and widely respected Instrumentalists from India performing and collaborating with globally renowned musicians such Pt. Vishwamohan Bhatt, Pt. Ronu Majumdar, Vid. Rajhesh Vaidhya, Vid. Chitravina Ravikiran, to name a few.

He has the rare honour of performing for the Honourable President of India and for the Indian Navy in Port Blair.

He is the lead flautist of the band - “Hues & Harmonies - The Indian Bamboo Flute Project“.

He was awarded TOP grade by Doordarshan/Prasar Bharati at a young age. Other notable awards are “Yuva Sangeet Natak Akademi Award” from Government of India, “Isai Peroli”, “Sri Shanmukha Shiromani”, Best Instrumentalist Award from The Madras Music Academy - 8 times, to name a few.

Flute J.A.Jayant has a presence on social media and his music can be found on Youtube, Facebook, Instagram, Apple music, Spotify, Amazon music etc.

https://www.flutejajayant.com/

https://youtube.com/@flutejayant?si=beMQactvLU1GPaRH

https://www.instagram.com/jajayant_flute?igsh=c2x2bWJyOG51Yjlz&utm_source=qr

https://www.facebook.com/share/1BdUhmTfbn/?mibextid=wwXIfr

Dr Jayanthi Kumaresh

Dr. Jayanthi Kumaresh stands as one of the most distinguished exponents of the Saraswathi Veena in the modern era. A twelfth-time Recipient of the "Award for Veena" from The Music Academy, Chennai, and a sixth-generation musician. She began her journey with the instrument at the age of three. Over a remarkable career spanning more than four decades, she has redefined the artistic landscape of the Veena, transforming it from a classical fixture into a vibrant voice on the global stage.

A visionary Carnatic modernist, Jayanthi has pioneered a distinctive musical idiom—one that honors tradition while embracing innovation. Her nuanced approach has expanded the expressive range of the Veena, reinvigorated interest among younger audiences, and transcended cultural and stylistic boundaries.

Her artistry has graced some of the world’s most prestigious venues and festivals, including the Sydney Opera House, Royal Albert Hall, Lincoln Theatre (Washington, DC), Théâtre de la Ville (Paris), San Francisco Jazz Festival, BBC Proms, WOMAD, Darbar Festival (London), and Celtic Connections (Scotland). Through landmark collaborations with global luminaries such as Ustad Zakir Hussain, the British Philharmonia, Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, Indian National Orchestra, and Lautten Compagney Berlin, she has positioned the Veena at the crossroads of classical and contemporary world music.

A committed educator and scholar, Dr. Kumaresh holds a doctorate from the University of Mysore for her pioneering research on Veena styles and techniques. Her digital initiative Cup O’ Carnatic has garnered over 8.6 million views, and evolved into The Cup O’ Carnatic Show—a sold-out interactive concert series across India. Through her online learning platform, the Jayanthi Kumaresh Academy for Veena, she teaches a diverse community of students aged 10 to 75 across more than 15 countries.

Her trailblazing contributions have been honored with numerous accolades, including the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (2022)—India’s highest national recognition for performing artists—Kalaimamani from the Government of Tamil Nadu, and the Sangeet Shikar Samman from Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, among others.

A disciple of Vidushi Padmavathy Ananthagopalan and Padma Bhushan Dr. S. Balachander, Dr. Jayanthi Kumaresh is not just a master of the Veena—she is a transformative force who continues to shape the future of Indian classical music on the world stage.

Kalyanpuram S Aravind

Kalyanpuram S Aravind is one of the most sought after carnatic vocalists of his generation of musicians. Aravind belongs to a family of rich cultural and vedic heritage which includes senior Harikatha Exponent 'Kalaimamani' Kalyanapuram Sri R Aravamudachariar and Kalyanapuram Sri R Veeraraghavachariar who are his paternal uncles.

He began his formal training in Carnatic at the age of 4 from Smt. Sudha Seshagopalan (Wife of Sri TNS). He continued his training under Sri S Kasthuri Rangan, a senior disciple of Sri TN Seshagopalan. Aravind now is being shaped and chiselled by none other than the Living Legend Padmabhushan Sangeetha Kalanidhi Madurai Sri TN Seshagopalan for the past 25 plus years.

Aravind has created his own stamp by rendering uniquely styled raga alapanas and neravals along with bhava laden renditions of viruthams as a part of his concerts. He has been bestowed with many awards and recognitions by premiere institutions in India. He has travelled to different parts of the globe

representing the Indian Carnatic music fraternity and has been instrumental in spreading the art of Carnatic music amongst the overseas rasikas.

Keerthi Kumar

Keerthi Kumar is a lighting and multimedia designer, choreographer, and co-founder of ARTMOS Productions, known for creating immersive visual experiences that merge light, movement, space, and rhythm. Trained in Kathak and arts management, he brings a rare multidisciplinary approach that allows light itself to become a narrative element on stage.

He has designed for leading companies and festivals across India and abroad, collaborating with groups like STEM Dance Kampni, Punyah Dance Company, Omkar Arts Singapore, and many others. Renowned for his innovative "lightscapes," Keerthi balances artistic vision with technical finesse, making him one of the most sought-after designers in contemporary performance arts.

S. Krishna

Ghatam, the clay pot instrument, is used to depict the rhythm in Carnatic music. It has found one of the most skilful musicians" - S. Krishna

Krishna trained under the Ghatam Vidwan (legend) V Suresh, was about 7 yrs old when he saw his Guru playing the instrument and was fascinated to learn it. As he began his journey, he attended various concerts and could grasp the finest of nuances, which enabled him to get on to the stage very early on. He has also been guided by doyen T.H Vinayakram.

During 2006, he gave his debut performance (Arangetram) under the able guidance of his Guru. Since then there has been no looking back. Known as Ghatam Krishna, he has been playing alongside Mridangists of various styles, accompanying both vocal and instrumental music.

In his fifteen years of experience on stage, his Ghatam has taken him to venues of great importance across India and to mention a few nations such as USA, Australia, Europe, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.

Krishna has received awards from prestigious forums and continues to offer his skilful percussion acumen coupled with his musical imagination. He has been accompanying TV Sankaranarayanan, Neyveli Santhanagopalan, Bombay Jayashri, Abhishek Raghuram, Ranjani-Gayatri, Sikkil Gurucharan, and Gayathri Venkataraghavan in their concerts across the world namely Poland, Singapore, Australia, Switzerland, Geneva and Lausanne.

"Dumroo", a percussive ensemble is an initiative Krishna has started along with a few fellow percussionists.
Apart from his performances, he has been a passionate Guru as he guides his students the art of Konnakol and Ghatam.

Awards and achievements

Yuva kala barathi from Bharat Kalachar.
Valayapatti kashyap award.
Youth of excellence.
Padma kiran from Padma sarangapani cultural academy.
B high grade from AIR.

Mrinalini Raghavendran

Mrinalini began her training in Bharatanatyam at the age of six under the guidance of Dr. B. P. Rekha Rao. She is currently continuing her artistic journey under the mentorship of Dr. Apoorva Jayaraman.

Nitya Narasimhan

Nitya has trained in Bharatanatyam under several gurus for over 25 years and is currently training under Smt. Shweta Prachande. Nitya is the Artistic Director of Prayukti Arts in Sunnyvale, California.

S.G. Pramath Kiran

S. G. Pramath Kiran is a sought-after percussionist, music producer, and sound engineer from South India. Trained in tabla under Pt. Udayraj Karpur and in morching by Vid. Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma, he later mastered diverse world percussions like djembe, congas, and cajón. A pioneer in blending Afro-Cuban rhythms with Carnatic traditions, he became one of the first South Indian artists to introduce global percussion structures into classical concerts.

Over the years, he has collaborated with legends including Dr. Mangalampalli Balamuralikrishna, Dr. L. Subramaniam, Pt. Shivkumar Sharma, Dr. Jayanthi Kumaresh, Ganesh–Kumaresh, and Mysore Nagaraj–Manjunath, performing at leading festivals worldwide. Known for his versatility and innovative approach, Pramath continues to inspire new dimensions in Indian percussion through his cross-genre collaborations and creative productions.

Priyanka Chary

Priyanka Chary is a multidisciplinary artist excelling in Carnatic music, Bharatanatyam, and veena. She trained in Bharatanatyam under Smt. Nirupama Vaidhyanathan and currently training under Shweta Prachande.

N. Rajaraman

Rajaraman is a renowned Ghatam artiste and disciple of Padma Bhushan Vikku Vinayakram, who began his career at 16 and has performed worldwide with leading musicians, bridging tradition and innovation through Carnatic music and Indo-French collaborations with French musicians. Some of his many achievements include- Sapthakshara, Lincoln Center, New York (2006); Sapthakshara – Rhythm Festival, Queen Elizabeth Royal Hall, London (2003, 2004); Best Performer Award – Music Academy (2014); Vadhya Kala Vipanchee – Dr. Balamurali Krishna's Trust;

Surya Ravi

Surya Ravi is a Bharatanatyam dancer and physical therapist with over two decades of practice. She is currently training under Dr. Apoorva Jayaraman.

Venkatraman

Venkatraman is a seasoned musician with over 15 years of experience, proficient in both the harmonium and keyboard. Under the tutelage of his esteemed guru, SV Narayanan, and is learning Advanced Hindustani lessons from Sri Dr. Ravindra Katari Ji. He has had the privilege of performing with renowned artists from the film industry, including P. Unnikrishnan, Tipu, Harini, Pravin Saivi, and Abhirami Ajai. His musical journey also extends to collaborations with eminent figures from the Carnatic music world, such as Kalyanapuram Aravind Soundararajan, Vittal Rangan, Kruthi Bhat, OS Thyagarajan, Sriranjani Santhanagopalan, and Neyveli Santhanagopalan.

In addition to his contributions to classical and cine music, Venkatraman has been actively involved in the namasankeerthanam tradition, sharing the stage with revered artists like Isaiperoli Dr. R. Ganesh, Brahmashri Udaiyalur Kalyanaraman, Brahmashri Senkottai Hari, and Hyderabad JS Sriram.

He has performed at several prestigious venues across India, including the Music Academy Chennai, Narada Gana Sabha Chennai, Karthik Fine Arts Chennai, Vani Mahal Chennai, Shanmukhananda Hall Mumbai, and Unnati Bangalore. His musical journey has also taken him across borders to stages in Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Chile, and Brussels.

Beyond his passion for music, Venkatraman serves as a Senior Decision Scientist in Supply Chain at Fractal Analytics, leveraging his analytical expertise. He holds a Postgraduate degree from the Indian School of Business (ISB), Hyderabad, and a Bachelor of Engineering (BE) from the National Institute of Engineering, Mysore.

In his free time, Venkatraman enjoys reading fiction and thrillers, as well as riding his Royal Enfield motorcycle.

Vidyuth Pasumarthi

Vidyuth was introduced to the classical dance form at the age of 6 by his mother Akila Rao, a dancer and founder of Srividya Dance school. Since 2019, he has been training under the guidance of Smt. Viraja and Sri.Shyamjith Kiran. Vidyuth completed his arangetram in 2024.





YOUTH ARTISTS

Aadhya Sridharan

Aadhya Sridharan is a fourth year student at Arizona State University, and has been learning Carnatic vocal music for over fourteen years under Vidushi Smt. Vasudha Ravi. She won First Place in the prestigious 2026 Cleveland Thyagaraja Aradhana Concert Competition and has received top prizes at numerous national and international Carnatic music competitions. Aadhya has performed extensively during Chennai's Margazhi season and at major concerts and festivals across the United States and India. She has also been learning Carnatic violin for eight years, currently under Vidwan Sri Kamalakiran Vinjamuri. Beyond music, she enjoys photography and video editing.

Aashrith Aravind

Aashrith Aravind is a promising young mridangam artiste and devoted disciple of Sri R. Sankaranarayanan. A prizewinner in both mridangam and Carnatic vocal competitions, including at the prestigious Cleveland Thyagaraja Festival, he has collaborated with eminent musicians from India and the United States. He has performed for leading organizations such as the Chicago Tyagaraja Utsavam, CMANA, and the Cleveland Thyagaraja Festival, and has been featured in several notable musical productions and ensembles. His vocal training under Vidwan Sri L. Ramakrishnan and his father, Aravind Sundar, enriches his artistry with a rare blend of melodic sensitivity and rhythmic brilliance.

Anirudh Suresh

Anirudh has been learning mridangam for the past 11 years from Sri. Ravindra Bharathy Sridharan. He has also been learning vocal music for the past 7 years and currently learns from Sri. TN Arunagiri. In May 2024, he had his mridangam arangetram accompanying Sri. Bharat Sundar. He has won prizes in many competitions such as the Cleveland Thyagaraja Festival and was inducted into the Hall of Fame by Life4You. He has played in the December Margazhi season in various sabhas for the past 2 years and is a regular accompanist in the Bay Area.

Arjun Prasad

Arjun is a 6th grade student at Santiago Hills Elementary in Irvine, California. He discovered his love for percussion at age 4 when he received his first drum set. Fascinated by rhythm, he began learning tabla under Jyoti Prakash ji and later continued his training with Pt. Rajgopal Kallurkar of Bangalore, India. More recently, he has been learning from the living legend Pt. Anindo Chatterjee. Arjun debuted at the Festival of Tabla in 2023 and since then has accompanied various groups and soloists in Southern California. Beyond tabla, Arjun is passionate about robotics, science, and writing."

Arnav Sudarshan

Arnav Sudarshan has been learning Mridangam and Layam from Vid. Prof. Ravi Balasubramanian for 9 years. Arnav performed his Mridangam Arangetram in 2024. Arnav has provided accompaniment support at prestigious venues such as the Cleveland Thyagaraja Festival, Ragathon at UC Berkeley, Kalasaagaram (Secunderabad), at several venues during the Chennai Music season and across the US. His accolades span multiple prestigious percussion competitions, including a dozen First Prize wins, in competitions such as The Hindu Margazhi Contest and across multiple categories at the Cleveland Thyagaraja Festival. Arnav aspires to grow as a performing artist and achieve excellence in this field. He is an eighth grader from Portland, OR.

Dhanya Pragaspathy

Dhanya Pragaspathy has been learning Bharatanatyam for 18 years from Smt. Anuradha Renganathan in New Jersey. She is currently being mentored by Guru Smt. Priyadarsini Govind. She has performed for various prestigious banners across the globe and has been a prize winner in various national competitions. She has also been a part of multiple productions and tours across the country. She was recently fortunate to dance with the Anubhava Dance Company in Boston. Dhanya continues to perform and learn avidly and is currently pursuing her Master's Degree at Boston University.

Krishna Velamoor Arun

Krishna Velamoor Arun, a talented 6th grader from Dublin, California, is a rising star of Carnatic music who has shown a deep love and exceptional aptitude for music since infancy. She has been learning music since the age of five and a half under the guidance of Sangeet Samrat Chitravina N. Ravikiran and Vidushi Apoorva Ravindran, and is also undergoing Chitravina training with both Shri N. Ravikiran and Vidushi Anahita Ravindran. Krishna has won the prestigious Tambura Prize at the Guruguhaamrta Global Musical Competition, earned multiple first prizes at the Cleveland Tyagaraja Festival, and been recognized as Best Performer in the Beats Radio Singing Contest. She has also won 1st prize in dance competitions at the Cleveland Tyagaraja Festival. She is a consistent winner at the Shravya Music Competitions, conducted by Padma Bhushan Dr. Sudha Raghunathan, as well as at Acharyanet Music Competitions, and has performed both solo and in ensembles at notable venues.Academically, Krishna is a National 9th Rank holder in the highly competitive Math Kangaroo competition and is listed on the National Roll of Honor in the Noetic Math Competition. She also learns the Melattur style of Bharathanatyam at Sridevi Nrithyalaya under the guidance of Dr. Sheela Unnikrishnan.With her dedication and diverse talents, Krishna continues to captivate audiences in music, dance, and academics.

Lavanya Karthikeyan

Lavanya Karthikeyan is a multifaceted emerging artist with a deep passion for both music and dance. Building on her foundational training with Smt. Sandhya Anand, she is currently receiving advanced training in Carnatic violin under Vid. Sri. Rajeev Mukundan, honing her technique, tone and musical understanding. Alongside violin, Lavanya continues her Carnatic vocal training under Vid Sri. Abilash Giriprasad, and Bharathanatyam training under Sri. Shankar Kandasamy of the Temple of Fine Arts, Kuala Lumpur, while drawing constant inspiration from her mother and first Guru, Smt. Radhamani Varadhachary. This blend of music and dance has deeply influenced her rhythm, stage presence, and overall artistic sensibilities."

Malini Iyer

Malini Iyer began her Carnatic music journey at the age of six under Smt. Asha Ramesh and subsequently from Smt. Rohini Venkatachalam. She is currently a disciple of Kalyanapuram Shri Aravind Soundararajan. She has received awards organized by the Papanasam Sivan Fine Arts Academy and Shri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeeta Sabha and has performed during Chennai's December Music Season, including at Shri Krishna Gana Sabha, as well as at venues across the United States. Malini also completed her Bharatanatyam arangetram in 2023 under Smt. Mythili Kumar of Abhinaya Dance Company and also learns Veenai from Shri Guhan Venkataraman. She is in her final year of college at UC Davis majoring in Applied Statistics.

Nachikethan Vivek Srinivasan

Nachikethan Vivek Srinivasan began his formal training in Carnatic music under Smt. Kiranavali Vidyasankar at the age of seven. He presented his maiden solo concert in India in 2014 at the age of eleven. Since 2019, he has been under the tutelage of his maternal uncle, Vidwan Sri S. Umamaheswaran. Nachikethan has performed at several prestigious sabhas and has won numerous prizes in competitions organized by leading Carnatic music organizations in the United States.

Neha Asuri

Neha Asuri is a student of Guru Smt. Akila Subramanyam, director of Salangai Arts, Virginia, USA, and has been passionately learning Bharathanatyam for the past 15 years, completing her arangetram in July 2022. Throughout her dance journey, she has competed and won top awards at various prestigious national Bharathanatyam competitions, such as Cleveland Thyagaraja Aradhana, New Jersey Natya Sangamam, and Saptami Foundation. Neha has been blessed to have the opportunity to perform on esteemed sabhas and stages in the US as well as in India, such as Varnam Salon NYC, Kartik Fine Arts, Tapas Natyotsav, Bhavan's Natyotsav, Austin Margazhi Festival, Cleveland Aradhana Festival productions, Kennedy Center for Performing Arts, and Natyanjali festivals in South India. Neha is a 2022 YoungArts award winner in classical Indian dance. She is a current junior at Cornell University double majoring in Biological Sciences and Sociology on the pre-med track and aspires to continue dancing her whole life.

Nivik Sanjay Bharadwaj

"Nivik Sanjay Bharadwaj learns carnatic violin under the tutelage of Vid. Sri. Lakshminarayana Pisupati of Atlanta and Vid. Sri. HK Venkatram of Bangalore. He also learns carnatic

vocal from Vid. Sri. Prashanth Krishnamoorthy of Atlanta and Vid. Sri. Ramakrishnan Murthy of Chennai.

Nivik has performed solo and has had the opportunity to share the stage and accompany renowned artists from USA and India. He was also blessed to have performed in Margazhi season at mutiple sabhas in Chennai and Bengaluru. Nivik is a rising junior at the University of California San Diego. He is a founder and president of “ShaDjam”, UCSD’s Indian Classical music organization."

Prahlad Saravanapriyan

Prahlad Saravanapriyan is a sought-after Carnatic violinist of prodigious talent from California, and is currently a senior disciple of Sangeetha Kalanidhi Lalgudi Sri GJR Krishnan Dr. Sri. Saravanapriyan Sriraman. He has also had the privilege of learning nuanced aspects of the art from the living legend, Padma Bhushan, Sangeetha Kalanidhi Madurai Sri TN Seshagopalan. He has performed and collaborated with senior artists including Sri Papanasam Ashok Ramani, Smt Nirmala Rajasekar, Sri Kalyanapuram S Aravind, Smt Bhargavi Venkatram, and Sri KV Gopalakrishnan to name a few, and has presented concerts at The Music Academy, Madras as well as the major sabhas & organizations in Chennai and the United States. A talented composer and research-oriented musician, he has composed and performed Ragam Tanam Pallavis in intricate talams and is known for his flair for innovative ideas rooted in traditional aesthetics. Prahlad is a Founder and President of ShaDjam at UC San Diego, where he is a sophomore pursuing a degree in NanoEngineering.

Prerna Shrivathsan

A disciple of Smt. Sindhu Shyam and Dr. Surabi Veeraragavan, Prerna has been learning Bharatanatyam for the past 16 years and completed her Arangetram in 2022. She has performed at prestigious Sabhas in Chennai during the Margazhi season as well as at venues in the United States. In 2025, she was awarded the Second Prize in the Varnam category at the Cleveland Thyagaraja Aradhana. Prerna is currently a senior at the University of Houston, pursuing a B.Sc. in Math with Data Science.

Rahul Musti

Rahul Musti is an 11th-grade student from Chandler, Arizona, and a dedicated disciple of Kalaimamani Shri Tiruvarur Vaidyanathan. A passionate mridangam artist, he is an Associate Young Faculty and accompanist at YADA and has performed at prestigious festivals including Cleveland Aradhana, YADA Yuva Tyagaraja Festival, and the Chennai Margazhi Season. Rahul was awarded 2nd Prize in the Senior Mridangam category at the Cleveland Music Festival 2025 and completed his mridangam arangetram in 2025. Beyond music, he is an accomplished cricketer preparing for the USA Under-19 National selections and enjoys photography and filmmaking.

Ram Sivaraman

Ram Sivaraman has been learning music since a very young age. He is adept in Carnatic vocal, Carnatic violin, and Western classical violin. He is currently taking advanced training under Smt. Sangeeta Kalanidhi Lalgudi Vijayalakshmi. He has given several concerts and has been part of elite ensembles and orchestras. Ram has received multiple music awards and recognitions and has won competitions at several international festivals, including the Cleveland Thyagaraja Festival. He is also a composer and writes compositions across several genres. Ram has collaborated with other musicians to present engaging events in his local community and has helped train several budding violinists and vocalists. He hopes to continue inspiring a passion for music in others.

Reva Srivastava

Reva Srivastava, U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts and YoungArts Finalist Winner, began her Kathak training at the age of 7 under her mother and guru, Smt. Anupama Srivastava. Over the past 15 years, her dance has come to embody rhythmic virtuosity, strong technique, sensitive expressions, grace, and nuanced artistry. Reva has performed widely across the U.S., including the San Francisco International Arts Festival, New York Kathak Festival, and All Indian Dance Festival at Carnegie Hall NY.

Shalini Sachidhanand

Shalini Sachidhanand is a rising senior from Portland, Oregon. She trains in the Melattur bani of Bharatanatyam under her Gurus, Sridharini Sridharan, the artistic director and founder of Kalashiksha School of Dance, and Smt. Manasvini Ramachandran, the principal of Kala Sadhalaya in Chennai, India. In 2022, she completed her Bharatanatyam Arangetram alongside her sister. Shalini has performed extensively at temples, cultural festivals, and community events throughout Oregon and has also presented

performances in Missouri, California, and India. Along with performing, she has participated in numerous Bharatanatyam competitions, earning first place at the Natya Idol Regional Competition and fourth place at the Natya Spartha National Competition.

Sharanya Balaji

Sharanya Balaji is the senior most disciple of Smt. Aishwarya Balasubramanian, with over 23 years of training. She is the recipient of the "Kala Rathna" title from the Cleveland Thyagaraja Festival and the Best Performer Award from Sri Parthasarathy Swami Sabha. She has presented over 20 solo margam recitals at premier venues in Chennai, including Krishna Gana Sabha, Kartik Fine Arts, Brahma Gana Sabha, Indian Fine Arts, to name a few and has also taken part in over 15 productions of the most distinguished choreographers of Chennai. Most recently, she was invited to perform at the Nehru Centre in London by the High Commission of India, UK, and served as a judge at the Cleveland Aradhana Dance Competition. Professionally, Sharanya is a product leader for Kiro in the Agentic AI organization at Amazon Web Services.

Shreyas Reddy

Shreyas Reddy is an aspiring Carnatic musician from the Bay Area, California. Currently a junior at Foothill High School, he has been training under various esteemed gurus for over 12 years. Presently, he is training under the tutelage of Sri Raghavachari of the Hyderabad brothers fame for his vocal skills, and under Smt. Shantala Subrahmanyan for his carnatic Flute skills. He has been a regular at the Cleveland Thyagaraja Music Festival for the last four years winning several prizes in the junior and senior categories.

Sinthu Sivaraman

Neha Sinthu Sivaraman is a disciple of Vidushi Sriranjani Tapasya Santhanagopalan. She's an upcoming Sri Lankan Carnatic vocalist based in the Bay Area, California, having completed her arangetram at the age of twelve in 2017. Since then, she has performed at several prestigious venues in the Bay Area and around the globe. She is also a recent graduate of UC Berkeley, and is planning on pursuing higher studies.

Shivaani Komanduri

Shivaani Komanduri has been learning Carnatic music since she was four, trained by Vid. Sri Kyvalya Kumar Chilla and now advancing under Vid. Sri Kamalakiran Vinjamuri. She's also a trained Kuchipudi dancer under her mother, Smt. Revathi Komanduri, completing her Rangapravesam in May 2022, followed by her vocal Arangetram in March 2026. Currently, Shivaani resides in Atlanta, Georgia where she works for a healthcare AI startup.

Srijan Chakraborty

Srijan started learning singing from his mother and father at 2 years old with a small keyboard, but started his formal music education in the hands of Srimati Guru Aparna Pai at the age of 4. After being introduced to Hindustani classical music and bhajans, Srijan started learning Khayal from Guru Dr. Aditya Sharma, a scholar of ITC-Sangeet Research Academy in Kolkata, and a disciple of Padmashree Pandit Ulhas Kashalkar. Between academic breaks and college, Srijan has kept alive both the tradition of classical vocal music as well as bengali music and harmonium performance. With his harmonium he has accompanied many performers, including Kathak dance concerts, tabla concerts, and vocalists. He hopes to continue his journey in music, keeping the traditions and spirit of Indian music alive.

Surya Ganesan and Sathya Ganesan

Surya Ganesan and Sathya Ganesan are students of Shri Chitravina Narasimhan and Shri Chitravina Ravikiran, and have been performing as a vocal duo in the Chennai Margazhi season for the few years. Sathya is also a student of Vid Bhargavi Balasubramanian. Both Surya and Sathya are also skilled percussionists, with Surya being a student of Shri Tiruvarur Vaidyanathan and Sathya being a student of Shri Ghatam N Guruprasad.

Tejas Murali

Tejas Murali is a second year college student at Texas A&M, and a Carnatic violin and vocal student. He has been guided by Vid. Shri Kumaresh Rajagopalan in violin for 12 years, completing his Arangetram in Chennai in August 2024. He has performed at the 2024 and 2025 Chennai Margazhi seasons and at music festivals in the United States, winning first prizes in the Cleveland Thyagaraja Festival senior competitions and awards from Hamsadhwani and Nanganallur sabha. He also learns carnatic vocal from Vid. Kruthi Vittal and has been mentored by Vid. Shri Abhishek Raghuram.

Tejasvi Subramanya

Tejasvi Subramanya is currently a junior at the University of Maryland. He has been learning Carnatic classical music for over 10 years and is currently under the tutelage of Dr. Gokul Chandramouli Iyer, a disciple of Sangeetha Kala Acharya Smt. Kalyani Sharma. Tejasvi has performed at numerous venues across the United States and regularly performs during Chennai's Margazhi music season.

Vamsi Maganti

Vamsi Maganti is a rising sophomore at the University of California, Irvine and is pursuing his bachelor's degree in Biomedical engineering. He began his initial learning under Vidwan Arangi Srinivasa Rao in Hyderabad and is currently under the tutelage of Padma Sri awardee, Sangita Kalanidhi Dr. Thiruvarur Bakthavatsalam .

Vignesh Nydhruva

Vignesh Nydhruva is a protégé of Prof.T.N.Krishnan. He began training at age five, under eminent teachers Sriram Krishnan and Krishna Kutty. He has performed in the United States, and India at institutions such as The Music Academy, Narada Gana Sabha, and Vani Mahal."

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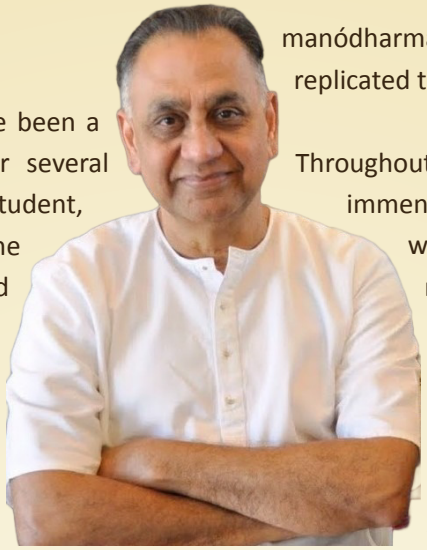






The Heartbeat of Tradition: Today's student is tomorrow's Guru

Thiruvaiyaru S R Krishnan



Dear artists, teachers, and parents,

For those who may not know me, I have been a performing musician and a teacher for several decades. But I always believe that I am a student, and that my life has been shaped by the grace of eminent Gurus. Having lived across four continents and traveled to over seventy countries, I have spent a lifetime learning to look at the evolving landscape of our art(s) with empathy, but also with genuine angst. Today, I want to share some 'tough love' insights about the sacred bond that sustains our classical traditions: the Guru-Shishya Parampara.

We are living in an era of profound generational shifts. While technology is a welcome tool, the rise of online learning has inadvertently created a service-provider/consumer model. We are seeing the exponential emergence of online, transactional teachers, and a progressive decline in the deep reverence historically afforded by disciples and their parents to their "Guru."

In our current "shortcut culture," music and dance are frequently treated as just another extracurricular subject to polish a college résumé. In the West, parents often impose strict "due dates" for a debut (Arangetram) to align with high school graduations. This pressure for quick success forces a hasty ascendancy to the stage before true proficiency is reached. When we prioritize deadlines over depth, we risk the pedestrianization of art—producing "musical mathematicians" and copycats rather than consummate artists with an emotional understanding of the true Tradition.

Ancient scriptures like the Skanda Purana remind us that a Guru creates, sustains knowledge, and destroys the weeds of ignorance. This depth of learning requires total trust. A critical aspect of the traditional system is experiential, hands-on learning—absorbing subtle nuances and manódharma (improvisation) that simply cannot be replicated through a screen or a crash course.

Throughout history, this relationship has demanded immense sacrifice. Our epics tell us of Ekalavya, whose absolute devotion allowed him to master archery simply by practicing before a clay statue of Drona, ultimately honoring his Guru even at a devastating personal cost. In the last century of Indian classical music, the rigor was uncompromising. Pt. Bhimsen Joshi famously performed menial household tasks for his Guru before being allowed to practice. Legends like Kesarbai Kerkar and Ali Akbar Khan faced unrelenting, rigid demands from their Gurus/mentors to achieve perfection.

Even in the Western world, intense mentorship dictates mastery. The modern scientific community echoes this; Nobel laureate Jennifer Doudna and the legendary Stephen Hawking both credited their early teachers for igniting their genius and teaching them to take risks.

However, intensity must never be confused with brutality (by the teachers), nor should the sacrifices be one-sided. While the rigorous standards of the past are rarer today, we are seeing a different kind of modern injustice—this time directed toward the Gurus. It has become common for families to seek years of foundational training from a local teacher, only to "dump" them immediately after their Arangetram to join a more "famous" or "marketable" name for advanced training. This leaves foundational educators heartbroken and uncredited.

To correct our course, we must establish a regular, honest dialogue between students, parents, and teachers. We must evaluate the actual capacity and enjoyment of the student and move away from arbitrary deadlines. Teachers must also have the integrity to practice the "power of 'No'"—refusing to push a student onto the stage before they are genuinely ready.

As young artists, you must move away from viewing your teachers as online AI tools or crash-course machines. Trust your Acharya wholeheartedly. Their word on your progress should be final. In the Bhagavad Gita (4.34), Lord Krishna advises: "Acquire knowledge by approaching a teacher with humility, inquiry, and service."

Many of you sitting here today may become great performers, educators, and leaders of tomorrow. If you carry a deep respect for this bond in your hearts today, the Tradition will foster and be fostered to benefit everyone mutually. Gurus have a responsibility to be selfless, but students have an equal duty to be steady, sincere, and grateful.

स्वाध्यायान्मा प्रमदः। प्रजातन्तुं मा व्यवच्छेत्सीः॥ [*Taittiriya Upanishad (1.11.1)*]
svādhyāyānmā pramadaḥ | prajātantuṁ mā vyavacchetsīḥ ||

[**Svādhyāyāt mā pramadaḥ:** Do not neglect your own learning, practice, and sharing of knowledge. **Prajātantuṁ mā vyavacchetsīḥ:** Do not break the unbroken thread (the lineage) of generation-to-generation transmission.

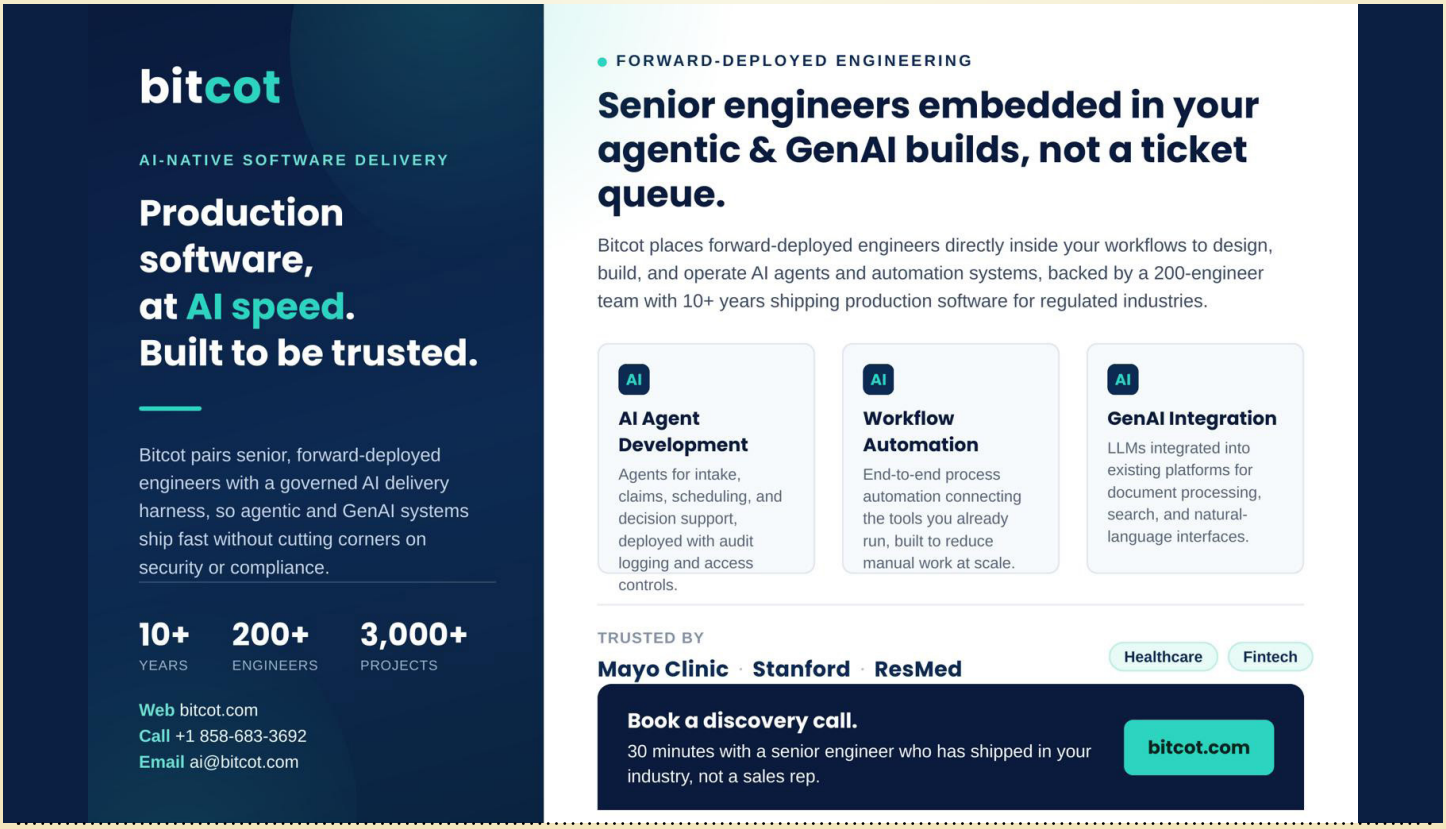
Note: While *prajātantu* literally refers to the thread of progeny, within the cultural tradition—and heavily emphasized in musical and artistic lineages—it represents the *Shishya Parampara* (the unbroken lineage of disciples).

Ultimately, this cycle of mentorship ensures that the lamp of wisdom never flickers out. By honoring the timeless heartbeat of the Guru-Shishya tradition, you do not merely preserve an art form—you ensure it is passed on to the next generation with even greater brilliance.

May your *Vidya* grow exponentially through your *Acharya's* grace and blessings.

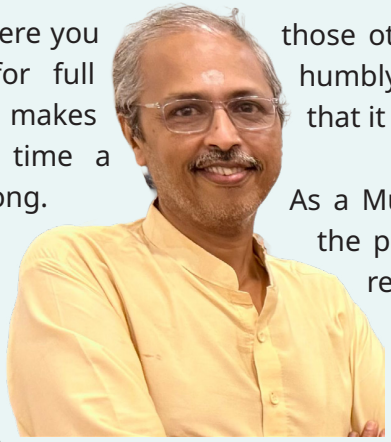
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[The above piece has been excerpted from the article '*Guru Bhakti: A Tradition in Flux – Algorithm Vs. Ancestry*' by the same author, originally published in the IFAA SD Souvenir 2026.]



Thoughts on Current Carnatic Music Education and Practice

Arun Prakash



I think carnatic music is an art form where you have guidelines as well as scope for full freedom within those guidelines, which makes it a most interesting, at the same time a challenging journey in itself to travel along.

What actually matters is how you proceed that journey with respect and commitment to those guidelines. Here are the guidelines: let us say when you sing a raga, it's not only the aarohana and avarohana, but getting an idea of the sound of the raga that has been handed over to us by great composers especially the trinity, and great musicians who were extremely passionate about the carnatic greatness of the system.

Having said that, it gives us all immense happiness to see that there are so many young musicians who are learning, practicing and performing carnatic music with commitment all over the world.

In my humble opinion, Art should be ever evolving, at the same time, can we dilute it and say it has evolved?

What is dilution?

Before explaining that, I would like to say that in carnatic music, many musical elements, such as sruti, laya, taala and bhava, abundant scope for carnatic creativity, lyrical brilliance as well as it's emotions, and many more are embedded so beautifully with proportion, balance and of course incredible variety.

Therefore it is complete and wholesome in all these aspects in its entirety.

So, do we really need to add something else from other beautiful genres like ghazal, Film music etc and call it evolution? Being myself an ardent lover all those other genres I have mentioned here, I humbly feel it is unnecessary and I am afraid that it may lead to dilution.

As a Musician who has been performing for the past 47 yrs in this artform, I earnestly request young musicians to keep all these things in mind while performing and teaching.

I would like to suggest a few things to all those young musicians who want to become a carnatic musician.

1) First of all, respect the artform, your guru and learn with passion.
2) Practice daily for at least 1 and half hours minimum by switching off your cell phones etc.
3) Sleep well during sleeping hours to keep your brain fresh and stress free.
4) Work hard to get perfection, so that your talent will go on increasing, which in turn will help in decreasing the insecurity quotient within you.
5) Talk about music with your friends, have a healthy discussion about kriti patandharam, manodharma aspects like raga alapana, niraval, kalpana swaras, korvais, listen to great carnatic musicians collectively and try to analyze, understand their ideas and ,do laya exercises to get grip on laya.

24X7 is not enough to know about this artform.

But every second you spend on it, it is pure bliss I assure.

Thank you IFAASD San Diego for asking me to share my thoughts.

God bless you all
Anbudan (With love)
Arun

Who Gets Remembered? - Women and the Making of the Carnatic Canon

Sriranjani Tapasya Santhanagopalan



I start by asking myself a seemingly simple question: Why weren't—and why aren't—there more women composers?

Why are they not present in our archives in comparable numbers? Why is the percentage of women composers in what we call the classical canon so surprisingly, even shockingly, low?

Perhaps the answer requires us to ask a slightly different question: were they absent, were they erased—or was it both?

This essay is not a rally against a particular gender. It is about inspirationally fierce, resilient women who managed to stand out despite social, political and institutional barriers between them and the art itself—women who took a hammer to the glass ceiling, shattered it and, not to forget, walked on the shards.

A small qualification before I proceed. I use "women" and "men" because these were largely the categories through which the societies, I am discussing organized marriage, labour, property, morality and access to public life. Our understanding of gender today is much more expansive and does not fit neatly into a binary. My purpose here is not to suggest otherwise, but to examine historical structures that operated overwhelmingly through that binary.

Who gets to create?

I don't know how many of you have read Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things—or her memoir Mother Mary Comes to Me. There's a very striking image there. She talks about how she had to almost shut herself away—with her very cute dog—to write. For years. To create something like The God of Small Things.

Because— creation requires space!

Virginia Woolf, in A Room of One's Own, conducts a thought experiment where she imagines what would have happened if Shakespeare had an equally talented sister. Would she have received his education? Would she have been allowed to travel? Enter the theatre? Write for money?

Probably not.

Woolf's argument was that a woman needed money and a room of her own to create. I think that room is more literal than we sometimes acknowledge. Creation requires silence, time and the ability to be unavailable. Domestic work, caregiving and the constant practical business of life consume not only hours, but mental space. Money can buy time, help and privacy.

This is not merely theoretical. Mozart had an extraordinarily gifted sister, Maria Anna Mozart, yet the name Mozart is almost automatically understood to mean Wolfgang Amadeus.

Fanny Mendelssohn was an accomplished pianist and prolific composer, but history made the Mendelssohn name overwhelmingly her brother Felix's.

Clara Schumann was among the great pianists of her time, composed extensively and helped establish Robert Schumann's music in the repertoire; yet today she remains considerably less famous as a composer than her husband. She also raised eight children and carried the family through Robert's declining health.

Talent was not necessarily absent. Equal access to posterity was.

The women were there.
Starting very early in Indian history, we find women

producing astonishing poetry.

Karaikkal Ammaiyar, one of only three women among the sixty-three Nayanmars, belongs to the earliest layer of Tamil Shaiva bhakti. Her poetry contains references to the seven musical notes and to instruments, giving us a glimpse into the musical consciousness of her time. (Shanlax Journals)
Andal, the only woman among the twelve Alvars, gave us the thirty verses of the Tiruppavai and the Nachiyar Tirumozhi. Her poetry is sung constantly. Yet when we casually enumerate the great composer-poets of South India, her name is still not always placed alongside the canonical male composers.

Then there is Avvaiyar. "Avvaiyar" itself was a title attached to more than one Tamil woman poet across different periods. The Vinayagar Agaval, traditionally associated with the medieval Avvaiyar, is a remarkable work of devotional and philosophical Tamil poetry. Even the identity behind the name reminds us of the fragility of authorship when women's histories are transmitted across centuries.

There was Akka Mahadevi, the twelfth-century Kannada mystic who renounced marriage, convention and eventually even clothing, declaring that she had no earthly attachments.

There were Mirabai, Janabai and other women of the bhakti traditions whose devotional poetry travelled through oral memory long after the circumstances of their lives disappeared.

There was Tallapaka Timmakka or Tirumalamma, wife of Annamacharya, who wrote the Telugu Subhadra Kalyanam, a substantial narrative poem on the marriage of Subhadra and Arjuna. (Wikipedia)

There was Tarigonda Vengamamba, the Telugu poet and devotee of Venkateswara, and Atukuri Molla, remembered for rendering the Ramayana into Telugu in an accessible style.

And there was Sengottai Avudai Akkal, whose life I find particularly moving. Married and widowed very young, Avudai Akkal was subjected to the brutal austerities expected of widows from childhood itself. At around eight years old, she would have had to endure rituals that included tonsuring her head, giving up all ornamentation, wearing plain white unstitched cotton cloth without a blouse, covering her head, living in seclusion and leading a life of abstinence and celibacy. And yet she produced extraordinarily sophisticated Advaitic poetry in colloquial Tamil—metaphysically complex and yet deeply anchored in everyday domestic life. Her poems were preserved by women in her district who sang them and integrated them into their daily lives. These poems must have been companions across generations to desolate widows, chafing wives and thirsty seekers.

In one extraordinarily powerful poem, she attacks ideas surrounding ritual pollution through the word echil—saliva which was associated with impurity. She says, in effect:

"Oh men, you lament, echil, echil, but there is no place without echil, O Supreme One.
Honey is the echil of the bee.
And is not all-nourishing mother's milk also echil, O Supreme One?
The echil of the fish is in the holy waters.
The Brahmins who bathe in the holy river are touched by echil too.
Are not pecked fruits the echil of parrots, O Supreme One?
The insect bores into the flesh of the coconut.
The little cat's excreta is everywhere.
Even space itself, she suggests, is not untouched."
What, then, in this world can truly be called pure?

Such a powerful poem!

Then there is K. M. Soundaryavalli. After considerable personal tragedy, including the loss of several children, she continued writing in Tamil, Telugu and Sanskrit. She later composed a cycle of thirty Telugu kritis in praise of Tyagaraja, the Sri Tyaga Guru Stuti Kirtanas.

Many women, I feel, had to become closet composers—writing whenever life and circumstance allowed them.

Ambujam Krishna left behind more than 600 compositions, predominantly in Tamil but also in Telugu, Kannada, Sanskrit, Hindi and Manipravalam.

Absence and erasure
For centuries, men occupied most positions of power in

aristocracy, religion, systems of patronage and formal scholarship. They therefore also became historians, teachers and cultural gatekeepers. Women were present—in courts, temples, homes and performance traditions—but they were not always regarded as intellectual contributors worthy of documentation.

Institutional recognition was slow too.

The Madras Music Academy's highest honour, the Sangita Kalanidhi, went to a woman for the first time only in 1968, when M. S. Subbulakshmi received it. Interestingly, the idea of recognizing a woman with the award had been proposed as early as 1955. The thirteen years between that proposal and M. S. Subbulakshmi's historic recognition tell us something about the wider cultural moment and the pace at which major institutions, like society itself, were evolving in their acknowledgement of women's contributions to Carnatic music at the highest level.

Consider C. Saraswati Bai, one of the great pioneers of Harikatha.

Her father was a station master at Gooty. The family eventually came under the patronage of a wealthy Madras household, and as a young girl Saraswati Bai absorbed music almost incidentally while sitting in on lessons. She later studied Hindustani music and Sanskrit. At the Ladies' Recreation Club in Madras she was repeatedly asked to sing. Running out of material, she asked her Sanskrit teacher, Pandit Krishnachar, for something more. He taught her to narrate stories through music. Almost without intending to, she had become a Harikatha exponent.

Then came the resistance.

Male Harikatha performers protested. Accompanists were reportedly warned that performing with her could cost them future opportunities. Menstruation was invoked to argue that a woman could not narrate the stories of the gods. Her relationship with her Sanskrit teacher was sexualized; representations were even made against his employment. Her first major public appearance reportedly required police presence because of the hostility surrounding it. And yet Saraswati Bai went on to become an enormously successful Harikatha performer.

The sequence is painfully familiar: tell a woman she cannot do something; question her morality when she does; then, once she succeeds, quietly forget how difficult everybody made it for her to get there.

The Devadasis and the art we inherited

Any discussion of women in South Indian classical music and dance eventually reaches the Devadasi community.

The concept of dedicating women to temples or places of worship is as old as civilization. The custom existed in Greek, Roman, Egyptian and other ancient cultures. Indian cultures were no exception, and the system was well developed in South India in particular from very early on.

At the Brihadeeswara temple in Thanjavur, inscriptions record hundreds of women attached to the temple establishment. They were assigned duties, residences and forms of remuneration. There were systems of succession: an older woman could train somebody to inherit her artistic responsibilities and property. These women were devar adiyal—women attached to the deity. Music and dance were inseparable parts of their work. Dancers sang; musicians danced; older performers could increasingly turn towards abhinaya and music. Unlike most women of their time, many women from hereditary performing communities were highly educated. They knew languages, literature and music and could function comfortably within sophisticated courtly environments.

As political worlds changed—from Chola to Vijayanagara, Nayaka and Maratha rule—their repertoire expanded. Tamil was joined by Telugu, Sanskrit, Kannada and Marathi.
Under the later Thanjavur court, Western instruments and musical influences also entered the ecosystem. These women were not simply preserving somebody else's culture. They were producing culture. And they possessed a striking degree of ownership over sringara. Erotic expression was not regarded by them as an exclusively male prerogative.

Which brings us to Muddupalani.

Muddupalani was an eighteenth-century Telugu poet, scholar, dancer and courtesan in the court of Pratapasimha of Thanjavur. Her Radhika Santwanamu is an extensive

Telugu work centred on Radha, Krishna, jealousy, desire and reconciliation. Muddupalani's Radha is not a coy abstraction. She desires, becomes angry, speaks about pleasure and demands emotional and sexual reciprocity. Later reformers found this deeply uncomfortable. Kandukuri Veeresalingam attacked Muddupalani's writing as improper. An earlier printed edition had already removed portions of the work.

In 1910, another Devadasi, Bangalore Nagarathnamma, produced an edition restoring material that had been excised. Colonial authorities subsequently banned the work. Nagarathnamma was herself formidable musician, scholar, linguist, composer and activist. She helped establish the shrine at Tyagaraja's samadhi in Tiruvaiyaru and, when women were excluded from the principal Aradhana, she supported and organised a parallel women's celebration. She composed too; Mathada Baradeno in Khamas remains part of the repertoire.

There is also a fascinating contemporary scholarly debate around Kshetrayya. Scholar Harshita Mruthinti Kamath has argued that the familiar seventeenth-century male poet-saint may not have been a historical individual at all, but a literary persona that emerged over centuries of textual reform. Her work asks us to reconsider how the intensely female worlds of sexuality found in padams attributed to Kshetrayya were transmitted and subsequently assigned authorship.
This remains an argument in scholarship rather than settled fact—but it raises an important question: how much women's authorship may have disappeared when literary respectability demanded a male author? There are many other women composers whose identities may also have been altered or obscured through transmission. For instance, Muddupalani, the Devadasi who composed Radhika Santwanamu, was later recast in some accounts as a male author named "Muthu Pazhani"—perhaps because such frank eroticism was considered unacceptable, or even unimaginable, in a woman's voice.

A combination of Victorian morality, nationalist fervor, upper-caste unease, the zeal of the anti-nautch movement and changing literary weather helped produce a process of cultural bowdlerisation. The figure of a male saint-poet was, after all, a far more respectable authorial presence than that of the supposedly "dissolute" Devadasi. Is Kshetrayya, then, partly a pseudonym? A later male authorial figure imposed upon material emerging from female performance worlds?

We may not have a definitive answer. But the question itself matters.

The women who walked towards the machine

Around 1900 came another enormous change: recording technology. In 1902, Fred Gaisberg of the Gramophone & Typewriter Company arrived in India to make commercial recordings.

These were entirely mechanical recordings. There were no microphones and no electrical amplification. The singer performed into a large horn; the vibration travelled to a diaphragm and moved a stylus that inscribed the sound onto a wax master. The recordings had to be compressed into the few minutes available on an early disc. The menfolk found the machine strange, intrusive and surrounded by suspicion. Yet women stepped forward.

When recording expanded into South India in 1904–05, Bangalore Nagarathnamma, Kanchipuram Dhanakoti and Salem Godavari were among the earliest South Indian artists recorded. Women were, in fact, central to the earliest

Kanchipuram Dhanakoti was a visible, travelling performer who sang before audiences across South India.

Her contemporary Veena Dhanammal was almost the opposite. Dhanammal did not seek the conventional public stage. If you wanted to hear her, you had to go to her. On Friday evenings, a small, close-knit gathering of invited musicians and connoisseurs came to her home to listen. The concerts were intimate, selective and deeply serious. She built enormous influence from a very small room.

Through that remarkable matrilineal tradition came T. Balasaraswati, T. Brinda and T. Mukta. Balasaraswati defended abhinaya and the expressive core of the sadir tradition at a time when Bharatanatyam was being reshaped for upper-class stages.
Brinda and Mukta preserved padams and javalis with extraordinary musical and textual subtlety. Without these women, Carnatic music and dance as we hear and see it

today would simply sound different.

Memory is political. Tradition is curated.

By the twentieth century, legislation and reform movements sought to abolish Devadasi dedication—ironically spearheaded, among others, by Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy, herself born into a Devadasi family.

But the result also produced a profound paradox.

The women themselves were increasingly stigmatized and economically displaced, while much of the music and dance they had preserved—Bharatanatyam, padams, javalis, abhinaya traditions and temple repertoire—was absorbed, sanitized and eventually presented as respectable classical and national culture.

The temples in which these women sang, danced, composed and preserved music still stand.
Stone upon stone.
Inscription upon inscription.
But their voices are inside those stone.

They say things are changing—that things have changed. But have they, really?

It is tempting to say that all this belongs to the past. Women can learn today. Women can perform. Women can compose. The doors, at least ostensibly, are open. But opening the door does not undo centuries of being kept outside it. We still carry the vestiges of erasure. In what way, you may ask.

A young composer today does not look behind her and see generations upon generations of women composers forming an uninterrupted lineage. She does not have the same abundance of reference points—the same enormous ancestral library telling her: someone like you has done this before.
And reference points matter. It gives you the ability to imagine yourself there.
There is another aspect to this that I am not ignorant of. Classical music is, by its very nature, deeply invested in the past. We value antiquity. We value lineage. In classical traditions, there is almost an instinctive authority attached to age—the old, the inherited, the time-tested acquire a special weight precisely because they have endured.

And there is something beautiful about that. I would never want Carnatic music to lose its relationship with its past. But it creates a peculiar problem when the past itself was unequal.

So, when we look at a Carnatic concert today, women may occupy the center of the stage—and yet the musical imagination being voiced from that stage can still be overwhelmingly male. Who composed the varnams, kritis, padams and tillanas that make up our concerts? Whose words do we repeat? Whose experiences, philosophies and imaginations have been granted the extraordinary privilege of being sung two hundred years after they were written?

This is why I do not think it is enough to say, Things have changed now.

And to point this out is not presentism. I am not interested in putting people of another century on trial according to the moral vocabulary of ours. I am interested in something much more immediate: what the choices and exclusions of the past have left us with in the present.

Which brings me to the practical question: What can we do now?

We can perform these compositions. We can commission contemporary women composers. We can fund archives and serious research into forgotten repertoires.

And, very importantly, we need to fund residencies for women composers and artists. Spaces in which an artist is given money, time, accommodation, freedom from commonplace obligations specifically so that she can think, experiment and create. If history denied generations of women the material conditions required to make art, institutions today can consciously provide them.
That, to me, is not charity. It is cultural investment.

A reminder.
To be fierce.
To break patterns.
To recover what has been forgotten.
And above all, to remember their names.

A Reading List for the Curious

1. Arundhathi Subramaniam, *Wild Women: Seekers, Protagonists and Goddesses in Sacred Indian Poetry*
2. V. Sriram, *The Devadasi and the Saint: The Life and Times of Bangalore Nagarathnamma*
3. Saskia C. Kersenboom, *Nityasumangali, Devadasi Tradition in South India*
4. Arundhati Roy, *Mother Mary Comes to Me*
5. Judith Mackrell, *The Correspondents*
6. Swapan Kumar Bondyopadhyay, *An Unheard Melody: Annapurna Devi*
7. Protima Bedi, *Timepass: The Memoirs of Protima Bedi*
8. V. Sita, *Tanjore as a Seat of Music*
9. Julia Cameron, *The Artist's Way*
10. Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*



ShadJam

ShaDjam @ UC SAN DIEGO

ShaDjam is a student-led organization at UCSD dedicated to celebrating and promoting Indian Classical music. Our mission is to create a welcoming space where students can learn, perform, and collaborate across vocal, instrumental, and percussive traditions. Whether you are an experienced performer or a curious beginner, we invite you to explore this timeless art as both a musical practice and a cultural expression. Through workshops, concerts, and lecture-demonstrations, ShaDjam fosters community, creativity, and a deeper appreciation for the discipline, diversity, and emotional richness of Indian Classical music.



An Agile Approach to Carnatic Music

Vanitha Suresh



Two Seemingly Different Worlds

I have spent much of my life in two seemingly different worlds. One is the world of technology, product management, transformation, and Agile ways of working. The other is the world of Carnatic music, as a student, performer, and teacher.

Over the years, I have realized how much these two worlds influence each other. The nuances I have learned through Carnatic music often shape the way I approach my professional work. At the same time, concepts from my professional world have made me think differently about how I teach music.

Last week brought this home to me. A student who began learning with me at the age of six, and has continued for nearly nineteen years, performed a concert to kick-start the 20th-year celebrations of Arohana Arts Academy before leaving to pursue his PhD. Another student, who has been learning with me for close to ten years, is also leaving to pursue a PhD in Economics. What makes me particularly happy is that neither of them sees this as the end of their musical journey. Both plan to continue learning from me and performing even as they pursue their doctoral studies. For me, that is perhaps one of the most meaningful outcomes of teaching: that music continues to have a place in their lives wherever their academic and professional journeys take them.

Watching students sustain their musical journeys while pursuing demanding academic paths made me reflect on a concept from my other world: Agile.

Navigating an Ocean

We often describe Carnatic music as an ocean. The deeper we travel, the more we realize how vast it is. There are rāgas, tālas, compositions, languages, composers, technique, aesthetics, and the seemingly limitless world of manodharma.

No one really "finishes" learning Carnatic music. Perhaps the objective is not to cross the ocean at all. It is to make the journey purposeful, to recognize how far we have come, understand where we are going next, and navigate this enormous ocean one meaningful step at a time.
This is where I think an Agile mindset can help.

In the corporate world, we may begin with an enormous transformation or a complex task, what we might call an Epic. Instead of trying to accomplish everything at once, we break it into smaller, meaningful, deliverable pieces. We build something, learn from it, incorporate feedback, and move forward.

Why can't we approach music the same way? We cannot make the ocean smaller, but can we make it more navigable?

From Minimum Viable to Minimum Lovable

This brings me to another concept from product development, the Minimum Viable Product (MVP). It is the smallest version that is complete enough to provide value while still giving us an opportunity to learn and build further. There is a wonderful parallel in music. A student does not have to master every possible dimension of a composition before presenting it. The first step might simply be to sing it confidently with śruti, tāla, correct lyrics, and musicality.

Later, the student may add ālāpana, then kalpanaswaras, then neraval. Established artists have always done this too. A composition enters an artist's repertoire in one form and continues to evolve as the artist explores it more deeply through years of performance and experience.

But art needs something beyond viability.

In product development, we sometimes speak of a Minimum Lovable Product (MLP), something that does not merely work, but also creates a connection.

A performance can be technically correct and still not move us. So perhaps, in music, our MLP should mean something slightly different: "Minimum Lovable Performance."

It does not need to be elaborate. It simply needs to be complete for that student's stage of development and have something in it, bhāva, beauty, confidence, personality, or joy, that allows a listener to connect with the music.

The Agile Carnatic Music Classroom

Once I started thinking this way, I began seeing parallels between an Agile team and the Carnatic music classroom.

The guru plays several roles. As the Product Manager or Product Owner, the guru understands the student, the audience, the larger goal, and what needs to be prioritized next. As the Solution Architect, the guru sees how today's lesson fits into the musician who is being developed over many years. Sometimes the guru becomes the Developer too, sitting beside the student, working through a phrase, solving a rhythmic problem, or building a kalpanaswara passage together.

Then there is the parent. One of the things I have always admired about the Suzuki methodology is its recognition of how important the parent is in a child's musical development.

In my Agile analogy, the parent is the Scrum Master. The parent is not doing the student's work, but is helping create the environment in which that work can happen. The parent encourages consistency, helps remove obstacles, and makes it possible for music to remain part of life amid school, examinations, extracurricular activities, and all the other demands on a young person.

Ultimately, though, the student is the Agile team member doing the work. The student has to listen, practice, experiment, make mistakes, receive feedback, correct, perform, and try again. As students mature, they gradually take ownership of this process and become independent musicians.

A Purposeful Journey

I think this way of looking at learning can be especially meaningful for students who are trying to balance serious music with academics, careers, and life. Instead of measuring progress against the distant and almost impossible goal of "mastering Carnatic music," we can help students recognize progress in many different forms. It could be learning a composition well, attempting ālāpana for the first time, preparing for a concert, or simply returning from college and reconnecting with music. Each experience becomes part of a longer journey, allowing the student to keep moving forward without feeling overwhelmed by how vast that journey is.

Agile does not make the ocean smaller. It certainly does not replace the guru-śiṣhya tradition, discipline, listening, practice, or years of immersion.

The Agile approach helps us remain on the journey and makes every step along the way purposeful.

——————

A Simple Agile-Carnatic Music Glossary

Agile → An iterative way of approaching a large or complex goal by breaking it into smaller, meaningful increments, delivering something of value, learning through continuous feedback, adapting, and then building the next increment.

Epic → The larger musical journey or goal

Product → The performance or musician being developed

Product Manager / Product Owner → Guru

Solution Architect → Guru

Developer → Guru when actively working alongside the student

Scrum Master → Parent

Agile Team Member → Student

Sprint → A focused period of musical learning

Increment → Demonstrable musical progress

MVP, Minimum Viable Product → The smallest complete, presentable musical outcome

MLP, Minimum Lovable Product → Something complete that also creates a connection

Minimum Lovable Performance → A complete performance with something the listener can love

Retrospective → Reflect, learn, and decide what to improve next



Celebrating the Unsung Heroes: A Personal Reflection

Vasudha Ravi



As artistes, we often speak of the experience of being on stage — the brilliance of our genre, the uncertainty of creativity, the spontaneity shared among performers, the discipline it demands, the joy of sharing music with an audience. But over the years, I've come to understand that the concert itself unfolds because of quiet, unseen efforts that happen long before we walk into the spotlight. Behind every performer is an entire ecosystem of parents, teachers, and volunteers whose dedication makes our musical journey possible. Each performance is not just a display of talent and practice — it is the culmination of countless acts of selfless care, encouragement, and commitment.

Parents: The First Gurus

Parents or even grandparents introduce us to music. They sit with us during practice, encourage us through difficult lessons, and celebrate every small breakthrough. They are the steady anchors who push us to expand our limits, even in something as routine as a daily practice. In diaspora communities especially, their role carries a deeper meaning. Parents become custodians of cultural continuity, ensuring their children stay rooted in tradition despite being miles away from their homeland and surrounded by different cultures. They manage schedules— theirs and their children's — drive to classes, pack snacks, plan around family, and, above all, create a home where music is not just an activity but part of their identity.

Whenever I watch a young musician perform, I see not only their effort but the love and perseverance of the family standing behind them. This becomes even clearer once we become parents ourselves, stepping into that same role for the next generation.

Teachers: The Guiding Light

As a performer and Guru, I know how profoundly the guru–s'ishya bond shapes a student.

Gurus offer far more than musical instruction — they offer discipline, patience, perspective, and a sense of belonging to a lineage. Just as valuable are the stories they share: the difficulties they faced, how their own parents supported them, and the bond they shared with their own teachers. These stories give a s'ishya a fuller understanding of the art form — how preciously it has been handed down through generations, and how it continues to evolve. This experience instils humility and grace, teaching us to hold the art form as a kind of benediction.

Having watched many gurus prepare their s'ishyas for festivals and concerts, I believe their role becomes even more delicate at these moments. They choose pieces suited to each student and the occasion, help them understand stage presence, guide them through nerves, and teach them how to carry themselves. Their investment is deep and often quiet — but it is this: guidance that helps young artistes discover not just how to sing or perform, but how to feel music.

Volunteers: The Invisible Backbone

Every festival I've been part of has reminded me of one truth: the people no one sees. Their work ensures everything flows smoothly, freeing us to focus on music. For travelling musicians especially, the meticulous care taken over hospitality, food, and transport turns each concert into a memory worth cherishing.

Not just behind the scenes, but at the venue too, you'll find volunteers managing schedules, coordinating backstage movement, handling sound checks, welcoming audiences, and creating an atmosphere of warmth and efficiency. Many are parents, former students, or rasikas who simply love the art form and give what they can. I've met volunteers with no musical background or understanding who still pour sincere

effort into making the festival succeed. Their service is an offering — a way of giving back to a tradition that has enriched all our lives.

Gratitude

As I close these thoughts, I cannot overlook the sense of gratitude that ties them all together.

Whether junior, senior, or veteran, every artiste must hold heartfelt gratitude for everything and everyone that shapes this journey. Our experience is formed by the hands and hearts of those who stand quietly behind us, beside us, and in front of us. It is essential for artistes to feel this deeply — it is what gives music its solemn soul, what teaches us to revere the art form and carry its peace through our performances. This matters even more for coming generations, because what shines on stage is not just skill or rehearsed technique, but the humility and devotion behind it.

Let us remember: this ecosystem teaches us that music is a shared journey, nurtured together —and that tradition stays alive not only through performers, but through everyone who contributes to the mighty art form in every way possible.

Namaste.



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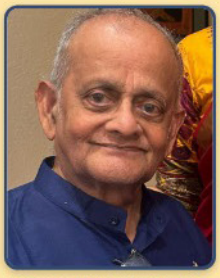
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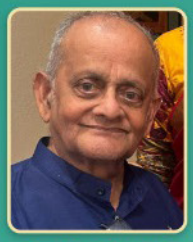


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Dr. C.M. Venkatachalam

Dr. C.M. Venkatachalam was introduced to music at a very early age by his parents. He studied under Late Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar and under Kollam Harihara Bhagavatar in Chennai, India. He considers the Late Sangitha Kalanidhi T. Viswanathan to be his mAnasika guru from whom he derives inspiration for teaching music. He is one of the founding trustees of Indian Fine Arts Academy of San Diego, CA. He teaches music to students in San Diego and Austin.

In 2023, he was recognized with “Ramamurthy Service award” by VVS Foundation. In. 2024, Melharmony Foundation, Madison, Wisconsin honored him with the citation “a significant educator and promoter of music and culture in North America.” In 2026, Natesha School of Bhrata Natyam bestowed on him the title "Natesha Sangeetha Maarga Darshaka"

He has a Ph D in molecular biophysics. He was a faculty in University of Michigan and University of Alabama in Birmingham. He worked as senior scientist in a software company for 23 years to develop computer algorithms for designing drugs.



Shankar Ramachandran

Shankar Ramachandran had the good fortune to grow up in Chennai surrounded by dance, music, literature and the arts. His mother and aunt were early students of Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai. His mother later studied dance and taught Bharatanatyam at Kalakshetra for more than 40 years. Shankar's grandfather was a Tamizh novelist whose essays, reviews and novels created a resurgence of interest in the performing arts of India. His great-aunt was a well-known Carnatic musician, as was his aunt.

Shankar attended school on the Kalakshetra campus where he imbibed an abiding interest in dance, poetry and music while struggling with the intricacies of physics, geometry, social studies and tree climbing.

A graduate in history and economics from Earlham College in Indiana, he pursued a career as a sales and marketing executive and has served as Vice President of marketing and regional manager for several insurance and human resources companies in the US. He also served as CEO of the Kalki magazine group in India for a time. He has lived in a number of places including Mumbai, Chennai, London, Montreal, Seattle, Hollywood and Indianapolis. But he calls Columbus home and has returned there after each sojourn.

For the past dozen years, he has worked in the Web and Internet space and runs yourwebster.com. The company helps small businesses, not-for-profit organizations, and artists leverage web technologies effectively to implement marketing and process strategies.

Since 2005, first as the president of CCMA (Columbus Carnatic Music Association) and now as the founder and director of Dhvani, India Performing Arts Society of Central Ohio, Shankar has worked tirelessly to bring some of the best musicians and dancers of South India to Central Ohio with a view to ensuring that the arts are a part of the life of area residents. He has presented over 200 concerts, ballets, plays, and workshops in Columbus, Ohio.

Shankar is the US Correspondent for Sruti Magazine, the leading Indian magazine on the performing arts. His articles and photography have been well received and include his interviews with Pandit Ravi Shankar, Vidushi Smt. Suguna Purushotthaman, the well-known singer Lakshmi Shankar, and Sangita Kalanidhi Trichy Sankaran. He has also covered several arts festivals and has written a number of articles and reviews.

In his spare time, he enjoys gardening and photography, writes a vegetarian cooking blog, and runs a photography website called Carnaticography (www.carnaticography.com). He maintains a blog and website of the legendary singer and philanthropist, M.S. Subbulakshmi (www.msstribute.org)



Darshana Patel

Dr. Darshana R. Patel was elected in November 2024 to represent the 76th Assembly District in northern San Diego County. The district spans diverse communities, including the cities of Escondido, San Marcos, and San Diego, as well as the unincorporated areas of Del Dios, Elfin Forest, Fairbanks Ranch, Harmony Grove, Lake San Marcos, and Rancho Santa Fe.

A research scientist, former school board president, and dedicated community leader, Dr. Patel brings a unique blend of expertise and compassion to public service. As the daughter of immigrants, she experienced firsthand the challenges of building a new life in California. Her journey was marked by tragedy at an early age when she lost her mother at 14, a loss that inspired her pursuit of medical and health research. After earning a B.A. in Biochemistry from Occidental College and a Ph.D. in Biophysics from the University of California, Irvine, she launched a successful career in biotechnology research before transitioning to community leadership.

In 2016, as the Poway Unified School District grappled with financial mismanagement and criminal embezzlement, Dr. Patel ran for the school board to help restore trust and effective governance. Elected as a Trustee, she focused on stabilizing the district's finances, and rebuilding governance structures, all with a focus on student success and future readiness. Her efforts earned her widespread community support, board leadership positions, and a successful re-election in 2020.

Beyond her local district, Dr. Patel has been a tireless advocate for educational equity and community engagement. She served as President of the San Diego County School Boards Association and on the California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs, where she championed policies to promote inclusion and opportunity. She has also contributed to public safety as a member of the San Diego Police Department Northeastern Division Captain's Advisory Board and has held leadership roles on the Rancho Peñasquitos Planning Board and Town Council.

Dr. Patel lives in San Diego with her husband and their three daughters.



Caroline Becker

This is Caroline's 11th year as the Middle and Upper School Choir Director at LJCDS. She holds a Bachelor of Music Education and a Master's in Arts Education. Caroline is in her 37th year of teaching and loves the joy that music brings to her students' lives. Previously, Caroline was Director of Performing Arts at Horizon Prep Schools in Rancho Santa Fe, musical theater director for the middle and high school musicals at Pacific Ridge, and director of choirs, show choirs, jazz choirs and musical theater in both Minnesota and Iowa.



Priyanka Tyagi

(Deputy Consul General of India - LA)

Priyanka Tyagi is currently serving as Vice Consul at the Consulate General of India in Los Angeles. She joined the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, in 2011 and has over 15 years of experience in diplomacy, administration, consular affairs and public service. During her career, she has served at the Consulate General of India in Durban, the Embassy of India in Bahrain, the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi, and is currently posted in Los Angeles. She has handled diverse responsibilities relating to administration, establishment, finance, consular matters, official visits, community outreach and coordination of high level engagements and events. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Delhi.

Samaja Seva Nidhi Awards

Indian Fine Arts Academy of San Diego (IFAASD) Announces

Inaugural Samaja Seva Nidhi Lifetime Achievement Award

For the first time, IFAASD is proud to introduce the Samaja Seva Nidhi Award for Lifetime Achievement, honoring individuals whose sustained dedication and selfless service have made a lasting impact on the community. This new recognition reflects IFAASD's commitment to celebrating excellence and lifelong contribution to social service towards the fine arts. We would like to honor the following individuals with the "Samja Seva Nidhi" award.

Announcing



Dr. C.M. Venkatachalam

Dr. C.M. Venkatachalam is a Founding Trustee and prominent leader of the Indian Fine Arts Academy of San Diego (IFAASD).

- **Founding Member & Trustee**: He is one of the original founding signatories who established IFAASD in 2007, serving continuously on the Board of Trustees for nearly two decades.
- **Artistic & Organizational Leadership**: Dr. C.M. Venkatachalam was introduced to music at a very early age by his parents. He studied under Late Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar and under Kollam Harihara Bhagavatar in Chennai, India. He considers the Late Sangitha Kalanidhi T. Viswanathan to be his mAnasika guru from whom he derives inspiration for teaching music. He is one of the founding trustees of Indian Fine Arts Academy of San Diego, CA. He teaches music to students in San Diego and Austin.

In 2023, he was recognized with "Ramamurthy Service award" by VVS Foundation. In. 2024, Melharmony Foundation, Madison, Wisconsin honored him with the citation "a significant educator and promoter of music and culture in North America." In 2026, Natesha School of Bharatanatyam bestowed on him the title "Natesha Sangeetha Maarga Darshaka"

He has a PhD in molecular biophysics. He was a faculty at University of Michigan and University of Alabama in Birmingham. He worked as senior scientist in a software company for 23 years to develop computer algorithms for designing drugs.

- **Governance & Continuity**: He plays a central role in organizational governance, supporting board leadership transitions, festival planning, and the preservation of classical Indian arts in Southern California.



Shri Shekar Viswanathan

Shri Shekar Viswanathan is a Founding Trustee and the former long-serving President of the Indian Fine Arts Academy of San Diego.

- **Founding Leadership**: As one of the original founders of IFAASD in 2007, he led the collective effort to build and shape the academy from its inception into a premier non-profit cultural organization.

- **Decades of Service**: For nearly two decades (serving as President, Secretary, and Trustee until May 2026), he spearheaded the organization's annual concert seasons, Youth Festivals, artist relations, and community outreach.

- **Enduring Legacy**: His dedicated stewardship laid a strong foundation for IFAASD, leaving an impactful legacy of promoting Indian classical music and dance across North America.



Shri Kasturi Srinivasan

Shri Kasturi Srinivasan served as a Trustee and Board Member of the Indian Fine Arts Academy of San Diego.

- **Trustee & Board Member**: He has been an integral member of the IFAASD Board of Trustees, contributing to the academy's operational management and long-term planning.

- **Governance & Program Support**: He actively participated in board governance, committee appointments, and program execution for major cultural initiatives, including the annual Youth Festival.

- **Community Advocacy**: Working alongside fellow board colleagues, he has continued to champion IFAASD's mission of bringing high-quality classical arts to San Diego and nurturing young talent.

Shri Lakshminarayana Peesapati



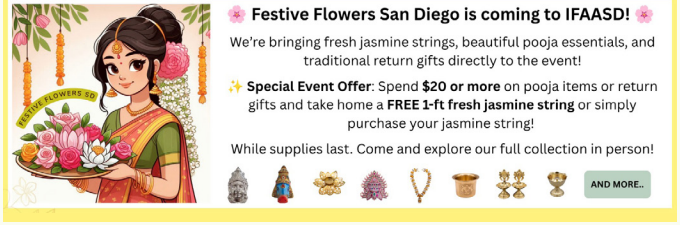
Shri Lakshminarayana Peesapati is a Founding Trustee and currently on the board of the Indian Fine Arts Academy of San Diego (IFAASD).

Key Profile & Service Highlights

- **Founding Member**: He is one of the four original founding signatories who established IFAASD in 2007 to preserve and promote Indian classical music, dance, and fine arts in the San Diego region.

- **Nearly Two Decades of Leadership**: Over 19 years of service, Sri Peesapati has worked closely with founding trustees, the board, and volunteers to shape IFAASD's cultural vision, community outreach, and programming growth.

- **Patron of Indian Classical Arts**: Recognized across the community as an ardent arts patron, his guidance and legacy continue to serve as a cornerstone for IFAASD's mission.



9th Youth Festival of North America - Food Menu

"Rasa Utsav" - A Celebration of Flavors & Fine Arts

SAN IDLI VEGETARIAN CUISINE

BAHAR Indian Restaurant & Catering

Time		Menu	
Thursday 09-03	DINNER	**"Nritya Sandhya" (Evening of Dance)** Veg Pulao, Malai Kofta, Achari Paneer Tikka, Phulka Roti	$10
Friday 09-04	DINNER	**"Raga Ratri" (Night of Melody)** Mini Podi Idli, Poori with Potato Curry, Rava Kichadi, Gulab Jamun	$10
Saturday 09-05	BREAKFAST	**"Prabhat Swaram" (Morning Notes)** Sambar Vada, Seviyan Upma, Madras Coffee	Complimentary
Saturday 09-05	LUNCH	**"Tarang Thali" (Wave of Flavors)** Veg Hakka Noodles, Veg Manchurian, Veg Spring Roll, Mohabbat ka Sharbat	$10
Saturday 09-05	SNACK	**"Sangeet Sandhya Chai" (Musical Evening Tea)** Irani Chai, Veg Samosa, Chutneys, Mango Lassi	Complimentary
Saturday 09-05	DINNER	**"Nrityanjali Feast" (Offering through dance)** Veg Biryani, Bagare Baigan, Hara Bhara Kebab, Double ka Meetha	$10
Sunday 09-06	BREAKFAST	**"Mangala Prabhat" (Auspicious Dawn)** Vada, Pongal, Coffee	Complimentary
Sunday 09-06	LUNCH	**"Kala Bhoj" (Feast of the Arts)** Bisibelebath, Yogurt Rice, Cabbage Poriyal, Pickle, Papad, Pineapple Kesari	$10
Sunday 09-06	SNACK	**"Taal Chai" (Rhythm & Tea)** Chai, Pakora	Complimentary
Sunday 09-06	DINNER	**"Samapan Sandhya" (Closing Evening)** Jeera Rice, Chapathi, Dal Tadka, Gobi Mutter, Sweet Live Chaat (Pani Puri / Bhel Puri) - **$5**	$10

Thank you

Expressing Our Heartfelt Gratitude

The Indian Fine Arts Academy San Diego (IFAASD) extends its deepest gratitude to everyone who helped make the 9th Annual Youth Festival a resounding success. This vibrant celebration of young talent, cultural heritage, and artistic dedication stands as a testament to the strength and passion of our community.

Our Inspiring Youth Performers

The Indian Fine Arts Academy San Diego (IFAASD) extends its deepest gratitude to everyone who helped make the 9th Annual Youth Festival a resounding success. This vibrant celebration of young talent, cultural heritage, and artistic dedication stands as a testament to the strength and passion of our community.

Gurus and Parents

We offer our profound respect and thanks to the dedicated gurus and teachers who tirelessly mentor, guide, and shape these young talents. To the parents, thank you for your constant encouragement, time, and sacrifice in fostering your children's love for Indian fine arts.

Volunteers and Organizing Team

A special note of appreciation goes to our incredible volunteers and committee members. Your tireless efforts behind the scenes—managing stage operations, digital logistics, hospitality, and event flow—ensures a smooth and memorable experience for everyone.

Sponsors, Subscribers, Patrons, and Community

We are deeply grateful to our generous sponsors, donors, and patrons whose continued support makes events of this scale possible. Finally, thank you to our wonderful audience for your warm presence, enthusiasm, and inspiring applause throughout the festival.

Together, we continue to nurture young talent and preserve our rich cultural heritage for generations to come.

Event Sponsors

Shri Balu Masti
T.A.L.A
Archana School of Dance
Smt. Revathi and Shri Suresh Subramanian

Hosting Families

IFAASD would like to thank all the families who are hosting the artists during this festival. We sincerely appreciate your generous gesture during our time of need.

Malathi and Mohanraj
Srimeenakshi Srinivasan & Diwakar
Kalyani & Nagaraja Maganti
Padmaja & Pavan Battiprolu
Divya & Sravan Dharmabotla
Priya & Arun Ganesan
Vish & Aler Krishnan
Revathi & Jagdish Gopalakrishnan
Swetha Maithreyi Varadharajan and Sriram Sridharan
Manju Jay and Jayram Moorkanikara Nageswaran
Aishwarya Bharathi & Srivatsa Madhav Vangury
Ramya & Viswanathan Subramanian
Uma and Ram Seshan
Archana & Amshumanth
Srividya and Sai Shankar
Vidhya & Bharat
Anu Rajagopalan & Raj Rangarajan
Sushma and Kiran Bhagwat
Priya and Arun Ganesan

SD Cultural Affairs

Financial support is provided by the City of San Diego Cultural Affairs.

Food Vendors / Contributions

SAN Idli Vegetarian Restaurant
BAHAR Restaurant and Catering
Jay Bhavani Vadapav Restaurant

Poster & Souvenir Design

Gnanavel Rajendran

Auditorium

JCC Staff and management

Lighting

Ganesh Bhat

Video

Serg Swiderski from Perfect Video

Photography

SPhotos4U

Youth Festival Planning and Selection Committee:

Dr. C.M. Venkatachalam, Revathi Subramanian, Narayanan Gopala, Pavan Battiprolu, Rekha Nandhakumar, Subbu Iyer, Aler Krishnan, Suman Nayak, Neha Patel and Sai Narain

Audio & Video

Sai Shankar, Subbu Iyer, Deepak Ramaswamy, Jagdish Gopalakrishnan, and Dr. C.M. Venkatachalam

Event Operations and Stage Management

Tadimeti Rao and Krishna Medurri

Food

Geetha Ramnarayan and Kalyani Maganti

Souvenir Management

Dr. C.M. Venkatachalam, Jagdish Gopalakrishnan, Revathi Subramanian, Pavan Battiprolu, and Sai Narain

Volunteer & Hosting Management

Pavan Battiprolu,
Nandini Nagraj,
Murali Bharadwaj, and
Kalpana Sharma

Finance

Rekha Nandhakumar, and Nandini Nagraj

Technology no

Sai Narain and Narayanan Gopala

IFAASD extends a **heartfelt thanks** to all the volunteers for their invaluable support. We sincerely apologize if any names have been unintentionally omitted.

A special thanks to our Chief Guests **Dr. C.M. Venkatachalam, Ms. Caroline Becker, Smt. Priyanka Tyagi, Dr. Darshana Patel** and **Shri Shankar Ramachandran** for presiding over the festival, and the IFAASD Board of Trustees and management committee, and the individual standing committees in charge of the various areas & our amazing adult and youth volunteers for

A special thanks

to

BitCot Inc.

for all their support with technology platform, mobile apps, and backend support.

IFAASD

would like to thank all the volunteers for their help. We apologize for any name we might have unwittingly missed.

IFAASD
Indian Fine Arts Academy
San Diego
http://www.indianfinearts.org

INDIAN FINE ARTS ACADEMY OF SAN DIEGO

Presents

FALL CONCERTS 2026

Date	Artists / Title of Concert	Location
September 3rd - 6th, 2026	**9th Annual Youth Festival of North America** **Featured Concerts**	
September 3 Thursday	Youth Festival Kickoff and Featured performances	David and Dorothea Garfield Theater, Jewish Community Center, 4126 Executive Dr, La Jolla, CA 92037
September 4 Friday	"The Cup O'Carnatic Show" with Dr. Jayanthi Kumaresh	
September 5 Saturday	A Thousand Years' Journey" Dance Production by Shri. Ganesh Vasudeva and Team	
September 6 Sunday	"Sangetha Kathamrutham" with Kalyanapuram Aravind	
September 6 Sunday	"Echoes of Flute" with Flute J.A. Jayant	
September 19 Saturday	Abhishek Raghuram	Seaside Center for Spiritual Living
September 26 Saturday	Sai Sisters	Seaside Center for Spiritual Living
September 27 Sunday	Dr. RS Jayalakshmi	Seaside Center for Spiritual Living
October 3 Saturday	Mandolin Trio - U. Nagamani, U.P Raju, U. Jaya Vigneshwar	Seaside Center for Spiritual Living
October 10 Saturday	Mysore Brothers Violin Concert	Seaside Center for Spiritual Living
October 30 Friday	C.S. Sajeev	Seaside Center for Spiritual Living
November 7 Saturday	Violin Duet by Sangita Kalanidhi RK Shriramkumar and VVS Murari	Seaside Center for Spiritual Living
November 8 Sunday	Vignesh Ishwar	Seaside Center for Spiritual Living
November 15 Sunday	All Composers Day	TBD
November 20 Friday	Samarth Nagarkar ((Hindustani Vocal Concert))	Seaside Center for Spiritual Living

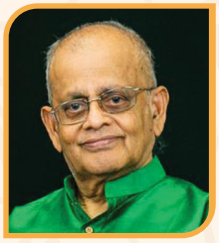
GET IT ON Google Play

Download on the App Store

Contact (858) 215-1209
info@indianfinearts.org

THE BOARD OF IFAASD


Aler Krishnan


C.M. Venkatachalam


Deepak Ramaswamy


Geetha Ramnarayan


Jagdish Gopalakrishnan


Kalyani Maganti


Kalpana Sharma


Lakshmi Pesapati


Murali Bharadwaj


Nandini Nagraj


Narayanan Gopalan

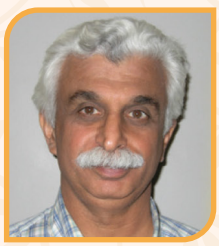

Neha Patel


Pavan Battiprolu


Rekha Nandhakumar


Revathi Subramanian


Sai Narain


Shashi Murthy


Subbu Iyer


Suman Nayak


Tadimeti Rao

PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS OF THIS FESTIVAL PROJECT.