

PERSONALITIES IN PRESENT DAY
MUSIC

KRISHNA IYER (E.)

PERSONALITIES
IN
PRESENT DAY MUSIC

By

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PREFACE

When the Editor of the *Indian Express* requested me to contribute to his daily, a series of sketches of some of our well-known musicians, it was not without considerable hesitation that I undertook the task. I could not think of them either as trifling cartoon studies or as serious scientific theses. If I did venture at all on the work in the way in which it has been done, it was only by the promptings of my love and respect for the art and the artists. The appreciative manner in which my sketches were received by the public has encouraged me in giving them a more enduring form in the shape of this book. The original articles have been revised and supplemented by short biographical notes wherever possible. The studies contained herein do not pretend to be exhaustive of all the outstanding music talents available in the profession; nor do they purport to be detailed biographies. It is more in the nature of pen pictures of platform musicians by a lover of the art than a treatise on high technique. If it can provide light enjoyment for an hour and incidentally some food for thought over our art and artists, it would not have been in vain.

I thank Messrs. T. V. Subba Rao, S. Doraiswamy Iyer and K. S. Venkatramani, Advocates, and others, for their suggestions and encouragement in revision.

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E. KRISHNAN.

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FOREWORD

MY DEAR KRISHNAN,

I read, with great interest, your studies of the leading Carnatic artists of to day. Let me congratulate you on the success of your attempt. A sincere love for the art and for the artists has helped and guided you in your effort and you have shown a generous appreciation of the subjects of your study. You have observed and depicted things with insight, engaging frankness and commendable freedom from bias. Most of your readers will, I believe, agree with me that your observations and comments are, broadly speaking and taken as a whole, just and fair, though I recognise that differences of opinion, especially in details are inevitable in a matter like this. You have however, provided considerable food for thought and I hope that loose and scattered views and opinions on the subject of music and musicians will be replaced by unbiased, refined and enlightened criticism. Your work has certainly prepared the way for that.

In its truer and higher forms, music is the natural and spontaneous expression of the living contact of the artist with the airs and melodies of a super-physical world. Through such contact, the imagination of the artist is enriched with a wealth of wonderfully clear, luminous and soul-stirring melodies. He feels lifted up even into an exalted state of consciousness, feels a purer joy and expresses himself in song. The great masters of the past created for us the enchanting Raga-forms of Carnatic music

through such rapport. These Ragas, rendered by the true artist, cast their spell on you; your inner and deeper nature responds to the call of the music and you share with the artist the sheer joy he has brought down—pure, delicate and refined. Thought is stilled and is replaced by enjoyment.

But it is the habit of the thinking mind to try to 'understand' all things in terms of the intellect and the reason, to discover and formulate the mechanism of all processes, to define, to arrange and classify. And so, it happens we have scientific studies of Carnatic music. Its Ragas and its Talas have been carefully studied, their forms, features, movements and modes carefully analysed. The notes of the ascent and descent of the Ragas have been fixed and the Ragas have been grouped and arranged. The talas have similarly been classified and their modes formulated. Rules of correct music have been laid down.

So far it is alright. But let us not forget that correct music, music that conforms strictly to all the rules of the Shastras, that satisfies all the scientific tests, can yet be flat and tiring. It may be faultless; but it may not be joy-infusing. We may admire the ability and the skill, the dexterity and the command of voice of the craftsman and marvel at the complexity and elaboration of his improvisations, with the rush of the swaras and the changing patterns of the swarajatis. But the soul remains untouched and feels no appeal and gives no response. What we miss are the essential elements, the elements that form the Jiva of the Raga and the song, and make them animate.

On the other hand, when a true artist sings a Raga or a Kriti, we at once feel the contact with a living thing,

with music that sends its appeal to the soul and evokes a response. A trained and discerning ear recognises, feels and enjoys certain delicate shades of musical sounds, fine touches and curves, and subtle movements,—often deviations from the standardised swaras. These are of the soul and the essence of the Raga itself felt and rendered by the artist. These elements, however, these graces of the Ragas, are not vague and indefinite or obscure, but are clear, vivid and precise and are recognised and identified by the aesthetic ear, though the science of music has not brought them within the control and domain of its rules. The Tala, in such music, has the same place as metre in poetry, supports and blends with the music unobtrusively, expresses its changing rhythms and patterns but never forces itself into the song and never seeks to imprison it. The song that is sung is the joyful expression of the imagination of the artist and invites the listener to accompany the artist to the source of his own inspiration.

Are we not to-day on the verge of almost forgetting this high state and royalty of Carnatic music, its true origin and its true nature? Are we not, too thinking, too intellectual in our appreciation of it? Are we not attaching too much values, based on Shastraic rules, founded on the intricate and elaborate mechanical patterns and produced by the ability and skill of singers and players but lacking in inspiration? Are we not ignoring or at any rate paying but scant respect to those true and essential elements constituting the jiva of the Raga and of the song? Are we not even encouraging our young and promising musicians to imitate those artists whose sole claim to renown is their skill and power of voice and ability to produce elaborate strings of swaras, to complicated tala

patterns and ability to vary the Kalas? In a word are we not almost setting up false musical values instead of true ones?

Your studies have come very timely. They would be found very useful, I am sure, by those who really desire to form correct standards of judgment, to discern and appreciate music with inspiration behind and, above all, by those rare few who have worship and reverence for the art, who have imbibed the traditions of the masters of the past, and felt the stir and the appeal of their songs and are looking forward to the advent of a new creation in South Indian Music and the arrival of a great Master to bring down to us further harmonies from the unseen.

MADRAS
15th December 1933. }

S. DORAISWAMY IYER.

INTRODUCTION

APPRECIATION OF MUSIC AND MUSICIANS.

Standards in art and appreciation thereof can seldom be expected to be uniform anywhere and much less so in South Indian Music. There is a growing feeling among savants, that it has fallen down considerably from the high standards of the classic art of the past. The unsatisfactory nature of the average training in the art, the modern exigencies of earning one's livelihood in the musical profession, the uninformed tastes and requirements of audiences particularly in urban areas, lack of appreciably frank and helpful criticism of art and artists, absence of higher ideals in the art than the strict requirements of their trade among most of the professionals and want of effective and useful co-ordination of even the sporadic and small efforts of the few in that direction—these are set out as some of the many causes for the deterioration in standards.

On the other hand, a new kind of growing enthusiasm for music is found wide-spread in the land. Far greater number of people are now found to enjoy and take to it than in the past. Newer kinds of graces and styles, polish and presentation are also observable in a few exponents of the art. From being merely a sole monopoly of the professionals, music has come to be practiced by a large number of amateurs as well among men and women. At any rate, in the average audiences of to-day, in a music hall, one may be sure of finding an appreciable number of

music lovers of both sexes having some touch with the songs sung in a performance.

CHANGE IN PATRONAGE AND TASTES

Whatever may be the divergence in the general view points of past and present music, the effect of the change of patronage from discerning princes and patricians to the mixed crowd of the streets is indelibly marked in the present day growth and development of the art. The demand of the populace of varying tastes and degrees of understanding has brought in a corresponding supply in it. A wholly ignorant audience would ordinarily enjoy the pleasing aspect of sweet sounds and might be content to take the lead of the initiated on the scientific and higher features of the art. But considerable sections of the present day music hall audiences with their nibbling acquaintance with a good number of catchy songs are not seldom found to crave more and more for what they themselves are very familiar with, than for other things equally important. With them, the man who sings a large number of pieces—preferably short ones—has perhaps a better and surer chance of wide popularity than others who may be able to expound their *ragas*, *pallavi* and other scholarly features of the art in a profound or elaborate manner. On the whole, there is more hurry than necessary leisure in the present day music in general. Those who go in for impressive, elaborate and leisurely rendering of ragas in particular or compositions in slow time measures are comparatively few. This combined with the excessive development of *tala* accompaniments has had no small influence in shifting the centre of interest from some of the essentials of good Carnatic music, such as absolute melody and grace, *ragas* and *raga bhava*.

Of course, *kritis* and other pieces should in the nature of things form the mainstay of a South Indian Musical concert. But even there, the question of variety in ragas, talas and the authors of the pieces sung and the quality of the same with reference to *raga bhava* are as important as their numerical quantity. Carnatic music has been rich in its composers and compositions and it is but natural that among them, the great Tyagaraja and his lyrical treasures should tower above the rest. But you cannot afford to ignore or neglect the pieces of other good composers and particularly those of Muthuswamy Dikshitar, Syama Sastri, Kshetriya, Arunachala kavi, Gopalakrishna Bharati and the like.

RAGA AND RAGA-BHAVA

The unique feature and glory of Carnatic music are to be found in its conception and beautifully classified system of ragas pure sound melodies of rich variety, exquisitely pleasing to the ear and capable of rousing different moods and emotions without the aid of words of any language whatsoever, though one may not believe in all the exaggerated and legendary notions of their magical effects. Classified and codified as they are with mathematical precision, you have got ample scope also in them for the play of your personal genius, skill and imagination. A musician who has got good conception of and mastery over ragas and raga bhava, gives a more distinct and exquisite flavour to what all he sings, than one who is comparatively deficient in them. And yet, as a result of the excessive development of tala accompaniments music has been driven to attune itself to the steel-frame jathis of the rhythmic variety, to the detriment of ragas and raga bhava. The climax is reached when *raga alapana* itself is

not infrequently found to be reduced almost to a sort of *swarajathis* though veiled in form.

The learning and exposition of compositions, swara and tala are perhaps comparatively more mechanical, and easy than those of ragas, which are somewhat elusive and which require no small skill, imagination, patience and other personal qualities. More than the latter, the former variety seems to suit easily the convenience and circumstances of the average professionals, with their struggle for life and desire to shoot up quickly into cheap fame and with their need to satisfy the tastes of large sections of modern audiences for music of the galloping variety particularly in pieces and swara sancharas. In the paucity of the natural grace of *raga bhava*, some of them seek to make their wares attractive by a sort of mechanical finish and polish. In short, they have got only the dry bones of *swara* and *sahitya* and well nigh lost the flesh and blood of *raga* and *raga bhava*.

FORMATION OF GOOD TASTE

This naturally leads one to the question of taste in musicians and music lovers, which is after all the chief determining factor in standards and appreciation of art. You cannot expect much of uniformity, steadiness or refinement in that matter in the many headed multitude; nor can you blame them for it. Hence all the more is the responsibility for forming good taste on the part of the musicians and the discerning among music lovers. The crowd will always follow what lead it is given, provided it is definite and strong. Tastes in turn depend not a little upon culture and character. The former gives the artist capacity to discern good from bad and the latter enables him to withstand or avoid any temptation to lower himself

and his art or to pander to the vitiated or moribund taste of the gallery.

VOICE QUALITIES

There is again the baffling paradox in voice qualities. It is a notorious fact, that in South Indian Music, not much attention is being paid to selection and cultivation of voices as such. An apparently rich and gifted voice, pleasing as it is on its first onset, is really found to be so ill trained as not to display the necessary elements of good and well cultivated music. It is a mountain stream rushing through a narrow strip of coastland to waste its waters into the sea without being harnessed to much useful purpose. Often you come across musicians of profound knowledge struggling with bad or indifferent voices and all the same compelling your respect and admiration for their wonderful 'sadaka' or practice and exposition of brilliant features of a highly developed system of music. The uninitiated crowd, including many of the so-called educated gentry who cannot be pleased except by sweet sounds as such would swear only by the music of the stage stars and slipshod amateurs with ravishing voices and bad or no technique and practice and would prevent by legislation, if possible, the so-called scientific musicians of defective and indifferent voices from taking to vocal music. The pundits and prudes on the contrary can only be propitiated by musical gymnastics and acrobatics and would look upon mere sweetness as effeminate and fit only for the ununderstanding plebians. In the absence of a master musician of the type of a Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer who was reputed to have combined in him most of the necessary, desirable and highly appreciable qualities of voice and technique, practice and presentation, culture and good

tastes, such kinds of factions in tastes and appreciation are bound to exist. There is not much to choose as between them. Nor can it be denied, that much of the want of attractiveness in the average professional music of the present day is due to the obtrusively overwrought technique killing melody and grace, though honourable exceptions may be found here and there.

NATURAL MUSIC AND HUMAN ART

It is but natural, that in the general dearth of good and well trained voices among the platform musicians, and scared away by the excesses of dry acrobatics of the technical experts, the democracy of the music loving public the real paying patrons of art, should run mad after sweet sounds as such wherever they are found, irrespective of the quality of human art. It may not be easy to convince the democracy, that sweetness of natural music, as found in the voices of women, young boys and singing birds—very necessary and desirable as it is, cannot by itself and without the human art of developed technique and practice make a whole and true picture of a highly refined and cultivated system of art as South Indian Music. Gold ore or bar gold as such is good and valuable. Beat it and mould it into some shape as that of a casket, it becomes attractive. Give it a desirable size and proportion and smooth polish as well, it looks very pretty. Carve some designs on it, it appears to be beautiful. Set some rubies, diamonds and other precious stones into it, it becomes brilliant. Place it on a well carved pedestal, it looks glorious. Both raw gold and the finished casket are valuable and will have a sure sale. But it is the latter that ought to be in greater demand and better priced. The trouble comes in only when

the casket is made of tinsel, or over carved with bizaare designs or ill polished and when the raw gold is clumsily kept unbeaten into any shape. So is the case with music as well, in its natural and cultivated forms. It is obvious that good music is to be sought for in a happy combination of natural music of sweet sounds and human art of refined technique, practice and presentation. When all is said, anywhere, at any time, no highly developed art can be well understood and enjoyed or properly valued without some initiation into its technique and conventions, though everyone need not be an expert either in theory or practice. The Indian art is not as if it is slowly growing from a crude primitive stage and by catching from here and there a tune or melody at random from all sorts of sources and making something new out of it. Nor is there absolutely no room for new creations in it. But before you create something new, you have to be acquainted with a large part of what already exists—or at least with its basic principles and principal features. Though the contribution of well meaning amateurs to art and their influence on improving tastes and ideals are not inconsiderable, there is perhaps not much room for that type of dilettante with slipshod or no technique in a system of art like Carnatic music. Want of understanding of even the bare elements of technique and principles of the art is no excuse either for the lack of proper appreciation of the same.

STYLES IN MUSIC

Like literature, music too has got its styles. Technique, rigorous as it is, can never make it uniform or stereotyped. In a way, it takes a highly personal colour, according to the individuality of the singer. It is not mastery of

the technique so much as the play of those individual graces, imagery and emotion and the manner of presentation which are beyond the realm of technique that marks a stylist. The same piece with set 'sangathis' or musical phrases sounds differently in different artists and much more so is the case with raga, swara, pallavi etc. A rose is best understood and enjoyed when it is seen, smelt and worn in a button hole or in a tuft of hair. No amount of analysis of its petals and pollens can help to give you a perfect picture of the flower. So is style in music. It has to be heard, understood, followed and enjoyed. At best one can only give out some of the outstanding characteristics of an artist, which make his art all his own and which are fairly describable in words. Again, though each artist may have some individuality of his own, it is not all who have developed it into markedly appreciable styles. Perhaps a distinct and catchy style is mostly a freak of nature and born with the artist, irrespective of any profundity or depth of knowledge or intensiveness in practice. A combination of many mediocre but necessary and desirable qualities presented with just balance and proportion often enslaves a listening audience much more than an extensive or even profound exposition of specialised aspects of the art. Once in a way, you may also come across a genius whose art, though essentially based on some technique and conventions, yet transcends both and revolutionises existing notions about them. Technique—though necessary and valuable—is but a vehicle or horse for the artist to ride on to the goal of artistic expression. To the extent to which he controls, guides and directs it on good and proper paths without being over-ridden or side-tracked by it, he will be a true and successful artist. The genius too makes use of it to fly to superb heights and explore

new and unknown regions and brings delight beyond the average run of human knowledge and imagination.

There is again the problem of regional differences in music ; that is, the same system of music appearing in different modes in different regions separated by distance. Further, the effect of the growing contact of other systems of music with ours has to be taken into account. While violently different views as to the desirability or otherwise of imbibing some of the necessary features of other systems of music into ours are being held among artists and art lovers, their influence, particularly that of the North, on our music is steadily and imperceptibly growing and making its mark on the art of some of our popular artists. Was not the refinement of the so-called Tanjore style of music itself due to some extent to the Northern Maharatta influence of the past ? After all, music in South India has been an ever growing art through changing times and tastes and how far the art of a later period can be confined and cramped within the theories and practices of a former one or of by-gone ages, is a highly debatable point. Kicking men out of conventional grooves may occasionally be necessary for the development of art. At the same time you have to draw the line where innovations or extraneous modernities strike against the very roots of the system itself and do not fit in happily and unobtrusively into it.

DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY OF PROPER APPRECIATION

These are only some of the factors in general, that have to be borne in mind in approaching the problem of styles and standards in music and appreciation of the same. If it is only a want of understanding of fundamental or essential requirements of art or elements of the technique,

the problem would not be very difficult and it may not be impossible to bring some sort of uniformity in the means and methods of appreciation. But public opinion, constituted as it is among the present democracy, is not altogether free from unnecessary sentimentality, and artificial factions and prejudices regarding art and artists. It is not uncommon also that really appreciable music is left unnoticed while mechanical and superficially spectacular varieties are applauded.

The situation is further complicated by letting loose on the public all kinds of radio broadcasts and gramophone records. No doubt, of late, honest and laudable attempts have been made by those concerned with such music to bring out the art of the leading and popular professionals and the service done by them in that direction is highly valuable. But the craving of the masses for some kind of easily understandable music, not to speak of the moribund tastes of considerable sections of the crowd, and the business exigencies of dealing in such music are making it extremely difficult if not impossible even for them to pick and choose, and keep to any standards. Perhaps these are only passing phenomena in a newly created flood of popular enthusiasm for music. The flood that has overspread itself may in course of time pool down into deep waters. In a way institutions like the Music Academy of Madras, the Rajah Anna-malai College of Music and the University of Madras are doing something to make good use of this enthusiasm and to bring some sort of order and light in what is apparently a chaotic field. Perhaps some good results too have been achieved. But what has been done actually is nothing when compared to what still has to be done.

CONCLUSION

In the nature of things and in such a state of affairs, criticisms in art are not likely to carry conviction in any universal manner. One may not look for much of appreciable help in that direction from the average professional experts, who constituted as they are with varying interests and obsessions, cannot be expected to care for or properly and generously estimate one another's art and much less speak out fairly and frankly about it. Even if they or other discerning people were to do so, it is doubtful, whether all professionals have as yet sportsmanship enough to relish or take it in for what it is worth with equanimity. It will be a great thing if they will only realise that the body public to which their art is offered for enjoyment and patronage has—with all its limitations—got some right to express its own impressions about them—provided of course they are fair and honest and that neither flattery is love nor frankness is hostility. It so happens, that, more than the professional artist, it is the disinterested layman of understanding who is able to view and appreciate things with proper perspective and less of personal equations. A critic need not necessarily be a creative artist. Again if artists require less of personal obsessions, critics require more of tolerance and better understanding as among themselves. Difference in view points need not necessarily lead to decrying of each other. It is not uncommon that an artist is more tolerant of friendly criticism than one critic of another. A captious critic and a blind admirer are more factious than the artist himself.

Anyway, music lovers cannot help thinking aloud on these matters. If some among them with breadth of outlook, balance of judgment and fair freedom from

obsessions and prejudices, attempt to understand and give out occasionally their impressions of professional art and artists they need offer no apology for the same and nobody need feel any hyper-sensitiveness about it.

In short, factions and favouritism, strong likes and dislikes, sentimentality and prejudices without much of a justification for the same are not likely to improve matters. Perhaps there would be little room for these, if one were to proceed on the assumption that no artist is perfect in himself and that each notable one has got something of his own to contribute to the art and appreciation thereof even in these days. Some attention to the essentials of good art combined with an open frame of mind, frankness and sympathy may go a great way in helping music-lovers to fairly understand and appreciate our art and artists.



Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar

Courtesy—The Saraswathi Stores

Personalities in Present Day Music

ARIYAKUDI RAMANUJA IYENGAR

Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyenger—in brief—Ariyakudi is perhaps the most popular name in the world of professional music, so much so large sections of average music lovers will swear by his style as the best. His is the rage and fashion of the day particularly with the younger generation among the music loving public and Ariyakudi's performance invariably draws a crowded house. Not much purpose will be served by trying to analyse the basis or the pros and cons of this popularity. Suffice it to say there it is—a fact ; and even his detractors cannot say, it is all undeserved.

When all is said, he has a style of his own—a pleasing, elegant and loveable one. Kriti, Raga, Swara, Pallavi, miscellaneous piece—whatever he sings is stamped with his individuality in a striking manner. His voice, though neither magnificent nor high pitched, has yet a natural melody and resonance of its own and contributes not a little to the elegance of his music. Characteristic *gamakas*, stresses and graces of a highly polished and refined type embellish his art. His curves though not sweeping or majestic are charmingly crisp and neat, while his copious and well proportioned *birkas* are greatly enlivening in their effect. All these may also be found so uniformly

distributed that you can expect them almost without fail in their respective places in his music in any performance of his. He is not supposed to attempt generally at much of extempore flights of fancy or *manodharma* on the platform. Not that he is incapable of it but he rather seems to believe in and be content with running his car in the smoothest possible rut or groove, lest any momentary or untried flights of fancy should land him in quicksands and mar the finish and elegance of his style. Antics or acrobatics have no place in his art. In short, simplicity, grace and finish are notable features of his style and sometimes it is the envy of even some of those who are credited with profundity in knowledge and subtlety of expression in music. He is well known as the disciple of the late Sreenivasa Iyengar of Ramnad, whose art appears to have been the chief source of his style.*

If Ariyakudi's performances are mostly enjoyable it is also due to one or two other features inherent in them. You find invariably a happy adjustment and proportion in the time taken up by the different items in his programme. He rarely tires out an audience and he is not known to overdo anything. Though ordinarily believed to be at his best in *madyamakala* pieces he has a decent intermixture of *vilambakala* compositions as well and gives always an interesting variety of items that please all sections of an average audience. It may be a surprise for many, that while South India can boast of rich compositions by a number of good *Vaggeyakars*, there are musicians of renown at the present day who do not know the compositions of more than four or five of them and who cannot give a 'Pada' proper, a Kriti of Dikshitar other than the

*He had his preliminary training under Mr. Malayappa Iyer.

“Vathapi Ganapathim bajeham” or a piece of Syama Sastry. Ariyakudi does not suffer from this fault.

Sprightly and stylish as he is in his ragas like THODI, BHAIRAVI, PURVAKALYANI, HUSENI AND KAPI, he appears on the whole to be at his best and most noteworthy in his kritis and miscellaneous pieces. Few are able to create uniformly as pleasant an impression as he in rendering them. In him the same pieces, though with set *sangathis* and sometimes with lesser number of them than the regulation ones, appear to have a greater charm and liveliness than in others. It is no wonder that some among his admirers do consider his style in them as the last word in art at the present day. Happy as he is in handling a wide variety of compositions of different authors, he is perhaps the happiest exponent of those of his own illustrious Guru the late Sreenivasa Iyengar of Ramnad.

His characteristic touches, graces and catchy mannerisms are so uniformly manifest in all that he sings that it may not be necessary or easy to single out any piece for special mention. Yet his ‘Evarimata’ in KAMBHOJI, ‘Elavathara’ in MUKHARI, ‘Rarama intithaka’ in ASaveri, ‘Sreevenkatesam’ in THODI, ‘Rama Katha Sudha’ in MADYAMAVATHI ‘Anudinamu’ in BEGADA, and ‘Sreeraghukula’ in HUSENI are some among his many pieces that are unforgettable. Few are found to handle short pieces like ‘Paluku kanda’ in NAVARASA KANNADA, ‘Rara seetha’, in HINDOLA VASANTA, and ‘Chinna nadena’ in KALANIDHI with greater effect than he. The miscellaneous part of his programme, generally of fair length and variety, seldom fails to create a feeling of vivacity among the audience. He is one of the few among male musicians who handle Padas happily. His raga SINDUBHAIRAVI and the famous

Hindi piece 'Vaishnavajanatho' (a favourite with Mahatma Gandhi) are all his own in their stylish rendering and are coveted items in his programme, as also pieces like 'Emicheyudhunate' in PHARAZ, and 'Unnaithinam thozhudhu' in JENJUTI.

About 42 years of age, of medium stature and brown of complexion, he has an engaging personality and easy manners. A smile in the face, a characteristic movement of the hand with the thumb uplifted and an occasional swaying of the head and body to match the movement of his hand ordinarily characterise his platform manners and bearing which are on the whole graceful. He has not developed any of the contortions that disfigure many a musician of repute.

His *adhara sruti* is rather low and very often it is the despair of the accompanying violinist and drummer. He does not appear to worry himself very much about any knotty problems in the theory and practice of music and if occasionally required to give his opinions on them, he seems to rely on the safe course of "much might be said on both sides." Few nowadays would fail to think of Ariyakudi's name first whenever a popular or paying performance is wanted. His is a loveable name in the field of South Indian music. There are few who have not heard and enjoyed his music and fewer still among the music loving young men and women who do not like to cultivate catches of his style.



Tiger Varadachariar.

Courtesy—Indian Express

TIGER VARADACHARIAR

You know there are two varieties or classifications in Literature and Art called "Dhrakshapaka" and "nari-kela paka". It requires no effort on your part to put a grape into your mouth and to enjoy the sweet juice. But you have to clear off the outer husk and break through the inner shell before you can taste the sweet kernel and delicious drink of the cocoanut.

Mr. Tiger Varadachariar's music may be said to belong to the latter type. He does not draw crowded houses; nor is his music for all and sundry. He is a musician for musicians; and you invariably find in a performance of his, a large number of musicians, senior and junior, among the audience. His voice is uninviting. Yet it is a marvel, how it is made to express wonderful musical imagery and phrases and to develop them at times in *kalas* that are ordinarily not attemptable by many a musician of much better voice. There appears to be no limit to his *mano-dharma*; and his imagination runs riot. You are struck by the profundity and depth of knowledge in and mastery over the science and art on one side and by the ever varying subtlety of imagery and expression on the other. To a grandeur of conception he adds a power and deftness of execution, as well. *Birka*, curves, *gamakas* and graces—sometimes too elusive—are all there, in a voice wherein you may not expect them at the outset. Musicians of repute there are, whose style or mannerisms you can catch and whose *sangathis* you can count on your fingers, con by heart and even repeat. Their music of 1933 would not be very different from what it was in 1923 and you may not learn more by hearing them again. But "Tiger" is ever fresh, ever varying, inimitable and sometimes mystifying.

There is no such thing as a well set groove or rut for him. *Raga, Tana, Pallavi, Kriti, Swara, Nereval*—whatever he touches is rich in *manodharma* and has the imprint of a master mind. His art is a gurgling natural spring of ever fresh water and never a placid pool of stagnant insipidity.

His stock of compositions of the great masters is considerable and varied. In the matter of ragas, there seems to be not much difference between *apurva* and ordinary, big or small, with him. He can handle an *apurva* raga as facily as an ordinary one and a so-called small raga as impressively as a *ghana* raga. KARAHARAPRIYA or PURNACHANDRIKA, KOKILADWANI or HINDOLA, SAVERI or BEGADA is capable of as much elaboration and easy manipulation in his hands as KALYANI or KAMBHOJI. Equally facile is his mastery and grip over tala and no redoubtable drummer need think of taking him unawares. Few succeed in handling the compositions of Syama Sastri so well as "Tiger". While the tilted *nadai* of those pieces is a hurdle or slippery floor for the average and the unwary musician, it is all an easy walk over for "Tiger". With all his mastery over tala, he does not kill you with any of the undesirable developments of excessive and unnatural *laya vinyasa* that are found in some esteemable musicians and that threaten to destroy the very root, tradition and glory of our musical system viz., *raga bhava*. He is unique in the art of *nereval*.

It is a delight for the violinist and drummer to accompany him. His development of *manodharma* being natural and varied from simple to the subtle and superb, those who accompany him (and the violinist in particular) are put on their mettle. While enjoying the master's music the

accompanying violinist is generally led on to more and more of variations. "Tiger" never handicaps those who accompany him. On the contrary he leads them on : and who would not like to be led by him ?

The Music Academy and other 'reform groups' set limits of three to three and a half hours' duration for an average music performance. But none would like to set a limit to "Tiger," lest his audience of musicians and music lovers who are taking in eagerly every variety of musical expression of his, should feel the poorer for not having had the benefit of a fuller display of the varied gems of his rich store. Even at the end of four hours of his music, you are not satiated and his powers of endurance are the only limit of time for him. He is an exception to the rule.

The stylish or catchy music of the popular musician is like the light tea which refreshes you after a day's toil. "Tiger's" performance is a full meal, provided you have got the stomach to digest it. The former is beach oratory of a popular demagogue and the latter is University lecture of a learned professor. When you listen to his performance, you feel as if you are in a world different from the ordinary in music, with an overwhelming idea of and admiration for a great system of classical art. If his music is classical, it does not offend modern tastes either. Because true classical music has a permanent and universal element of beauty and appeal in it, without any borrowed embellishments of other systems. You hear him once and--except for the voice--you have enough food for thought over the magnificence of the art of the old giants of whom Patnam Subramania Iyer was perhaps the last, and 'Tiger' was a disciple of that great artist.

With a rather big, burly figure, he is not very prepossessing in appearance. He is past the middle age and yet he is full of vitality and power in execution. The movement of his hands, often one up and one down, and occasionally to the front and back with the fingers bent in irregularly, may not present very graceful gestures and are sometimes said to suggest remotely the claws of a tiger. The name "Tiger"—a title which appears to have been given to him in recognition of his talents and which is perhaps expressive of his power and grip over the science and art—is not musical either, though he seems to be fond of it. His voice is often out of tune especially at the initial stages and requires not a little grinding, before it warms up to a brilliant display of colourful fireworks. He enjoys his music while on the platform as much as the audience. Often at the finish of a brilliant display culminating in prolonged cheers from the audience, you will find him also heartily joining in the gleeful laughter of the assemblage and enjoying the situation like a child.

As an artist, he compels your respect and as a man he is lovable. With child-like simplicity of manners, he is good and generous to a fault. He has a word of kindness and commendation to all and he can rarely be found to speak ill of others. Great as he is in art, he has an engaging humility. With no airs or reserve, he is genial in company and conversation with a quaint humour of his own. Sincere in his art, he always attempts to do his utmost; and if in his own opinion he falls short of his expectations at any time, he feels very much about it. South India cannot boast of many instances of such sincerity in art. Among the platform musicians, he is one of the few who evince an intelligent interest and take part in discussions over knotty problems of theory and practice in music

and who can give authoritative demonstrations in the same though you may not always expect from him a strong or decisive lead on doubtful points. He is capable of appreciating modern viewpoints and requirements. He has a working knowledge of English and a fair amount of general culture as well, that fit him for many things for which the average musician is unfit.

As a platform musician he does not appear to have had a very popular or unchequered career. As one of the three brothers, well known for their gifted talents in music and music lore (the other two being the late K. V. Srinivasa Iyengar, author of "Sangeetha Ratnavali" and other books, and Mr. Krishnamachariar), he was always recognised as a musician of good substance. Born at Colletpet near Tiruvotiyur on the 1st of August 1876 as the third among six sons of Ramanujachari, a Kalakshepam artist, he was educated up to the middle school standard of those days. Strangely enough, his father disliked the idea of his sons taking to music, and young Varadachari with three of his brothers had to satisfy their passion for music and pick up their knowledge of it with all the more avidity by moving in the company of the then reputed musicians and attending their performances without their father's knowledge. Among other things, the art of one Ramachandraiya in playing ragas in a masterly manner on his violin used to fascinate the young lads. Masilamani Mudaliar a photographer and disciple in music of the famous Raghava Iyer took great interest in young Varadachari and helped him considerably in learning the art. Singaraachariar (senior) also had something to do with the development of his talents. At the age of fourteen, he came under the influence of the great Patnam Subramania Iyer and remained with him for over three years. His early proficiency

in and substantial knowledge of the art came to be easily recognised and gave promise of a great future. But as the elders of the family did not look upon the musical profession with favour, the young man took service as a clerk in a surveyor's office at Calicut in August 1899, on a salary of Rs. 12. The pucca musician in him was however found out in the Bhajanas conducted by his head-surveyor. Subsequently service as a tutor in music in a few leading families and performances here and there brought him some popularity in Malabar and Salem and recognition from the Mysore palace as also the title of 'Tiger' from the music public of Mysore in 1916. Again owing to some illness he had a considerable period of obscurity in seclusion, during which he appears to have contented himself with delighting his personal friends in private with his music—often singing a single raga for several hours together. It was perhaps left to the Music Academy, Madras, to draw him out and harness his energies and talents for the benefit of the public in general more systematically than before and to make him help in shaping the renaissance in music that is at present revitalising the art in the south. It was but natural that when the Academy's Teachers' College of Music was started in 1931, he was appointed as its first principal; and when the University of Madras followed it up in the subsequent year with a Diploma Course in Music, he was taken in there. It is perhaps the first time when a public institution like the University of Madras was able to engage a really learned and great master of the art to fill and adorn a seat of learning in the field of music.

It must be remembered that he can only be a professor for higher studies in music for post-graduates in the art—in the sense that they have

already had sufficient preliminary training and are something of musicians themselves, capable of easily grasping intricate and difficult things from him. It is doubtful whether he can be a mere pedagogue to suit the requirements of beginners and those who have no sufficient grounding in the preliminaries. He is the best illustration of that standing paradox that all good voiced artists may not necessarily give good music and that master minds though handicaped with bad voices can set up the highest standards in the art so far as the cultivated aspect of it is concerned. Of course you may not consider his as perfect music for want of one of its essentials namely a good and melodious voice. Music lover! if you want only light enjoyment of pleasant popular music and sweet sounds, do not go to "Tiger." If you are something in music and know which is which in the art you will find in him a treasure house of varied gems of rare brilliance, not always easy to choose and grasp. Drink deep or taste not the pyrean spring.

PALLADAM SANJEEVA RAO

Of all musical instruments, the flute has in India, attained a unique hallow around it, not merely because of the intrinsically entrancing nature of its sound but also because of its association with the Divine Lord Krishna. To South India was given the gift of developing that instrument to a marvellous extent and to the late Sarabha Sastry the credit of having brought it to its present glory. The echoes of that Orpheus of India are said to be discernible in the present in Sanjeeva Rao who is the leading popular figure in that field. A little over the middle age and fair of complexion, Mr. Sanjeeva Rao is an amiable figure greeting you with copious laughs and plenty of humour not always natural. The youngest of the three sons of Venkobachariar, a pious devotee learned in Sanskrit, Sanjeeva Rao was born at Palladam in Coimbatore District on 18th October 1882. It was while his blind elder brother Prananathachar was learning vocal music under Shadkala Narasiah of Sálem reputed for his *Varna* compositions, that young Sanjeeva Rao picked up the preliminaries in musical training and acquired *swaragnana*. After the death of Narasiah, the blind brother took to Violin practice under Siyali Narayanasami. Sanjeeva Rao followed suit and attained easy proficiency in it by the age of twelve. He then took a fancy for flute and discarding the Violin began to disport himself with a pipe of four or five holes after the manner of shepherd boys. When Sarabha Sastri visited Satyamangalam about that time (for four performances for Rs. 100 in the aggregate!) the lad Sanjeeva was introduced to him by his elder brother as one yearning to learn flute. After hearing him play on the violin the great master flutist promised to take him up as his dis-



Palladam Sanjeeva Rao

Courtesy—Orr's Columbia House

ciple though he wondered why a boy with such skill on the Violin should change his instrument. As a disciple the young man was with Sarabha Sastri for about seven years, though he had obtained early proficiency in the instrument and began to give performances by himself by the end of the third year of his training. His poverty necessitated him to go out often for earning his livelihood by his own performances even during the period of his training. The generous guru showered his blessings on him and lived to see his own disciple winning laurels at an early age. On his death bed he is said to have given directions to his people to hand over his own flute to Sanjeeva Rao with his good wishes. After his master, he has been the dominating figure in the field of flute and no series of performances in a music sabha is complete without Sanjeeva Rao's flute.

The glory of his music is mainly the sound of his flute. The instrument at present handled by him is that of his master, handed down to him with his blessings. It is said to be a little longer than the average flute. With exquisite melody it has an appreciable volume as well and in the hands of this wizard it enraptures the soul of all and sundry. Mr. Rao is not noted for any great stock in the matter of compositions of various kinds. But whatever he touches is turned into grape and honey. His "Ninuvina Namadendu", "Nenendu veda kuthura", "Patti viduvaradu" and a few other pieces are reminiscent of the exquisite touch of his great master. He handles bigger pieces in *Vilambakala* as well, and to a large extent they are managed well. His rendering of ragas is the most appreciable. To the colourful melody of the sweet sound of his instrument, he adds curves and *gamakas* in an exquisite manner. Within limits he has broad plans and varied imagery

while he steers clear of intricacies and profundities. He has developed the art of playing alternately in the higher and lower octaves, common at the end of the *Alapana* of a *ghana raga* in this instrument to almost mechanical perfection and the cheers of the audience also follow mechanically. In addition to ordinary and well known ragas he handles a certain number of *Apurva* ragas as well and his *Ragamalika* is always awaited with interest.

With your ears filled with the exquisite melody of his ragas and most of his pieces, you do not mind, if you feel occasionally an irrepressible and over-speedy drift in his time measures dragging the accompaniments and the time keeping enthusiasts of the audience as well, to involuntarily speed after him. All the same he has been playing often in combination with the biggest among the accompanying veterans. Perhaps it is a matter more for a passing smile in the discerning among the audience than for any serious comment and you enjoy his performance none the less. Of late he is also seen developing the not very enjoyable habit of overdoing *Swaraprastara* by hanging a thirty-minute swara manipulation on the peg of a five or six-minute kriti and often bigger pieces as well. In the result, at the end of three hours, you will still find him with his kriti part of the programme unfinished and two-thirds of the performance still to be rushed through, without that balance and proportion which would take the audience through with unabated interest. Of late a certain amount of airy puffing in the sound of his otherwise exquisite production is also observable particularly when he is overdoing a thing.

The requirements of a flutist do not allow the man to disfigure himself with grimaces or bad gestures and you

do not find any of these things in Sanjeeva Rao on the platform. While keeping time for his accompaniments during a *Thani avartha* or solo play of a drummer, you may find him occasionally a little absent-minded or perhaps lost in admiration of the art of the redoubtable drummer and continuing the strokes of a tala even after the solo play is finished to the merriment of himself and the audience. On the whole he is genial on the platform.

He does not avoid conferences where problems in the theory and practice of music are discussed. When he is present he does take part in them though you may not get much light out of him. He does not cavail at the conferences and discussions of experts, nor is he much affected or improved by the ideas coming out of them. Withal, Sanjeeva Rao is one of the idols of the music-loving public, young and old, and there does not seem to be as yet another to take his place.

GAYAKA SIKHAMANI MUTHIA BHAGAVATHAR

Of the many ways and means by which spiritually inventive genius of the country has sought to inculcate ethics and morals and devotion to God in the minds of the ununderstanding masses, Harikatha Kalakshepam is a unique and interesting one. Roughly, a Kalakshepam is a discourse on Bakthi in the form of a story in a musical setting. How far the original objective of the institution is still kept up at the present day may be a debatable point. Connoisseurs of art attend a Kalakshepam mostly for art's sake and for the interesting variety of music that it contains, while religious minded people and ladies who perhaps are the real mainstay of any religion in the world flock to it with equal zeal. While the music of the concert proper tends more and more towards intellectual pleasure of the initiated, that of the Harikatha Kalakshepam has a larger and perhaps more universal appeal than the former and a special colour given to it in the setting of a story. If a Kalakshepam has any place at all among musical entertainments its musical part should be of no lower quality or standard than that of the regular music concert. Very few are the musicians that combine good story telling with high quality of music and among the few, Muthia Bhagavathar is a leading luminary.

Among men of art whose name and happiness are ordinarily supposed to be at the mercy of random patrons perhaps the one who has earned the goodwill and esteem of rajahs and nobles, musicians and music lovers, the cultured and commonfolk is Muthia Bhagavathar. About 56 years of age, and impressive in personality, well dressed and polished in manners, with a winsome smile, and



Muthia Bhagavatar

Courtesy—The Saraswathi Stores.

over suavity of expression and surrounded always by a number of his sishyas, he moves, talks and has his being almost like a prince in Durbar. Poor or well-to-do, he cannot think in small terms of his life or art. That is his star; and odds are such as to carry him through life like that.

The Bhagavatar is the scion of an illustrious family which has been well known for its musical and scholarly traditions. His maternal grandfather Muthusubba Bharati was an author of Vedanta Natakas and Keertanas of no mean order. His father Lingam Iyer was himself a musician. His cousin the grandson of the said Bharati is no less than Muthusubbaier of Tamil *pada* fame. Muthia Bhagavatar was born in December 1877 at Punalveli in Srivilleputtur Taluk which was the ancient abode of the family before it shifted to Harikesanallur. He had his preliminary training in music at the latter place under one Appakkudam Sastri.

As a boy of tender age his folk songs were the rage of the people of his and surrounding villages and led him once to take part in the famous Kalyanarama Iyer's theatrical shows. It was the chiding slap on his cheek by his irate and outraged uncle Lakshmana Suri for that act of his that drove him to the feet of the illustrious Sambasiva Iyer of Tiruvayar the disciple of Mahavaidyanatha Iyer and to have the rare privilege and fortune of learning the best in music—not to say of the treasured secrets of the great masters in music lore. After a few years of training, the Bhagavatar appears to have spent his early life as a platform musician of the regular concert type. His first public performance was given at the age of seventeen at Tuticorin where he was presented with a Tambura which he cherishes even to-day. It was during those days that he visi-

ted Travancore and won recognition from the princes of the ruling family. In the meanwhile, he had been training himself in the art of Kalakshepam with the help of his old tutor Appakudam Sastri and one or two gifted elders of his own family and giving also occasional performances. Subsequently he came under the influence of one Krishna Bhat a Maharatta Kalakshepam artist, who contributed not a little to his stock of tunes or *varnamettus* of rare beauty and charm and also to the re-shaping and refinement of his art. His birth and up-bringing in a family noted for musical traditions and scholarship in Tamil and Sanskrit, his natural gifts, his training under a great master in music, his contact with the veteran musicians and Bhagavatars of his early life—all contributed to make him the master of the art with a combination of many rare qualities. His own brother the late Harihara Iyer was a musician of no mean talents and served him as one of the accompanying chorists for a long time.

Few can rival him in the engaging mellifluousness of speech in Tamil. He has the gift of the gab to an amazing degree. Whatever he talks is interesting. Of all the musicians and music scholars who gave university lectures in music at Madras, none attracted as much crowd and evoked as much enthusiasm as he. A natural fund of humour enlivens his story-telling. His good culture enables him to rein up the rather free tendency of an average Bhāgavatar to indulge in cheap wit and low humour. Withal he is noted for a characteristic pun on words which was found to be a little overdone in his earlier years. His songs and *Varnamettus* are of perennial interest and please you even at the hundredth repetition. Unlike many of the Bhagavatars who indulge in digressions over questionable themes neither very relevant to the story

nor dignified, Muthia Bhagavatar may be found often taking up interesting subjects in music for his necessary digressions and he is the fittest man to do it. For he is a musician first and Harikatha artist next—though he is ordinarily known and liked more for his Kalakshepams than a popular vocalist of the regular musical concert.

He has broad acquaintance with the compositions of many of the great *Vaggeyakars* and particularly with the compositions illustrative of *lakshana*. He has made a broader study of the pieces of the greatest of composers, namely, Tyagaraja and is noted for giving a Kalakshepam with that saint himself for his theme. If you are very particular, he can also give even to-day a regular performance of the purely concert type. You may not take it as a model or even as a very enjoyable one; nor has he any illusions about it. As a Lakshana Vidwan, he commands the respect of all musicians and experts. Among the professionals of the day, he is one of the few who are constantly delving into the mysteries of the *lakshana* aspect of music and who can readily give convincing and authoritative demonstrations in the same. As one having acquaintance with the important languages of the South, he has been found to tackle easily and engage all the different linguistic elements in conferences like those of the Music Academy, either as an expert member or as president of the sessions.

Above all, his place as a musician of note is due to his being a *Vaggeyakar* as well. In South India—rich as it has been in its composers and compositions, the last word has not been said in them and after a period of comparative sterility since the death of some of the master minds, it is given to the Bhagavatar to come out as a composer of some

repute. He has been composing all his life and the incentive of the Maharajah of Mysore—that unrivalled patron of art in South India—has enabled him to bring out compositions in abundance, some in rare ragas not touched by previous authors. His one hundred and eight kritis on Goddess Chamundeswari are noteworthy. It may be too early now to enter into any critical study of his compositions. Suffice it to say, some of these and other compositions of his have an individuality of their own—vigorous and engaging with an avalanche of graded *Sangathis*.

It is an irony that he too—like one or two others—should suffer from the handicap of a voice not very inviting. It is perhaps the dominant will, power and capacity behind the man that force a rather unwilling and not helpful voice to give out music. Withal it does not appear to have stood seriously in the way of showing out his innate capacity which brought him honour and patronage from more than one ruling prince and nobleman, and the title of *Gayaka Sikhamani* as well.

If he has enjoyed patronage from princes and patri-cians, he has also been known to help to some extent many other musicians also to get deserving patronage. Unlike most of the professionals, he is actuated by higher ideals in art and by a genuine desire to see it improved and spread and to help those who are toiling in that direction. He never considers himself too old or too learned to learn further. As a man he is good, kind and generous. He cannot deny a request. His desire to please everybody is perhaps his weakness.

Having gone through all the ups and downs of a musician's career, if to-day at the 'autumn of his life, he is

basking in the sunshine of the 'royal patronage of Mysore, none deserves it more than he and few had put it to greater use than he for the benefit of the great art.

It is no wonder that after Vidwan Tiger Varadachariar was taken away by the University of Madras for service in the Diploma Course in Music the Bhagavatar was the only one who could be thought of to fill the post of Principal of the Teachers' College of Music of the Music Academy at Madras. He is also a factor in the renaissance in South Indian Music and his contribution to it will be none too mean. To know him is an honour and to hear him is pleasure and instruction.

VEENA DHANAM

Stringed instruments of the indigenous type in music are of many varieties in India and among them, the Veena holds a premier place. Add to this a certain sentiment of divinity on account of its association with Goddess Saraswathi and its importance cannot be over exaggerated. The Veena is of various forms and in the South it is said to have taken its present shape with fixed frets in the time of Raghunatha Naick of Tanjore. Its sound is sweet. The most beautiful part of its music is in its graces and *gamakas* and if you want to enjoy the best of them you must hear Dhanam on the Veena.

Far advanced in age, sans eyes, sans teeth, this old woman is still seen to handle this instrument in an exquisite manner. It looks as though the instrument is invented for her and she for the instrument. At the very outset you will be struck by her meticulous care and skill in the primary art of tuning it to perfection. With a desirable proportion, balance and magnitude in all that she plays, her music can never be cloying or boring. Melody, curves, *gamakas* and graces—in short most of the elements and essentials of good music she has in plenty ; but everything is in its place. You can never find her overdoing anything. The same *sangathi* sounds in her more gracefully than in the most redoubtable platform musician of the scholar variety. It is not easy to make a choice for special mention from among her stock. Her PANTU-VARALI, SAHANA, SAVARI, BEGADA, SURATI, DURBAR and KANADA among other ragas have an arresting charm. She often sings also to the accompaniment of her Veena. With her soft tone well attuned to its softer melody she can be heard even to-day rendering her songs in a slow



Veena Dhanam

Courtesy—Orr's Columbia House

and impressive manner with clear pronounciation of the *Sahitya* so as to be fully expressive of their *Bhava*. In short, her style is grace, sweet grace and sweetest melody; and whatever she touches is saturated with *raga bhava*. The mechanical acrobatics of some of the present day intellectuals are conspicuous by their absence.

The sound of the average Veena is notoriously mild and not well adapted for large audiences. It is at best an instrument for a drawing room, requiring pin-drop silence and straining ears of a patient audience. Veena Dhanam's is milder still perhaps better fitting a bed room. Withal, the melodies that she produces enraptures your ears and bewitches your heart. Her music is another reminder of the innate beauty of the Carnatic art in its classic purity.

Dhanam is one of the older veterans who are the repositories of a considerable stock of compositions of the well-known masters; and she is unique in being perhaps the only one who knows and handles a large number of *Pada* compositions of many varieties. It is even feared that many of those rare varieties may die with her for want of transmission to deserving disciples or proper recording of the same. In the lyrical flood of the great Tyagaraja, the ponderous majesty of Dikshitar's compositions, and the galloping tendency of modern day musicians and their favourite pieces, it is very doubtful whether the value of *Padams* as a factor in Carnatic Music is duly appreciated. Discerning minds will tell you that in the matter of *Ragabhava*, a *Pada* has got greater scope for its display than a masterpiece of the great kriti composers. (Sing side by side the 'Bala vinave varada' of Kshetriya and 'Everimata' of Tyagaraja in KAM-BHOJI and the "Inthamohamemira" of Kshetriya and, 'Ak-

shyalinga' of Dikshitar in SANKARABHARANA and see for yourself.)* Further the *bhava* in a Pada is much more important than any intellectual manipulations. The *Sangathis* that you develop in them have to be more in tune with the *bhava* of the song than mere varieties of mechanical swara manipulation. In short, they have to bring out colourful shades of emotion rather than dry—and intricate—freehand designs of fancy. Most of the Padas are closely adapted for "*abhinaya*" in Dancing and as such, a Pada cannot allow anything that is not useful for the display of a definite *bhava*. There is no hurry in it and you have ample leisure necessary for the display of choice *raga bhava*. Carnatic music at the present day suffers not a little by the want of this necessary leisure and desirable *raga bhava* and by the substitution in its place of too much hurry and mechanical acrobatics, not always in tune with the *bhava* of the song. Now you need not seek far to find how of all living musicians, Dhanam is so exquisite in her ragas and rich in *raga bhava* in all that she sings and plays.

Further, few have had the privilege and fortune of exchange of musical ideas with the great veterans of the past and fewer still have used that privilege to better advantage in the acquisition of musical riches than Miss Dhanam. She is the gifted child of fortune on whom all the angels and fairies have showered unstintingly their varied blessings and boons. She is the grand daughter of Kamakshamma who was reputed for her *Bharata Natya* and vocal music. Her mother (adopted daughter of the danseuse) was a good songstress having had a rare training

*It is only a point of view. None the less, that each of these two types of compositions has got its own beauty and value, is unquestioned.

under Subbaraya Sastri the son of Syama Sastri. Her uncle Appakkannu (the sister's son of Kamakshamma and a disciple of the renowned violinist Ponnuswamy) was an artist of no mean ability on the violin. In a family of such rich traditions in music was Dhanam born about the end of May 1868. She was herself endowed with rare musical genius and her precocious talents came to be known as early as the age of seven. She had her training first in vocal music under her own mother and then under Sattanur Panchanatha Iyer. By the age of 11 or 12 she had obtained easy proficiency in the art. But the passionate desire of her grand-mother to see her emulate Veena Gowri (of Mylapore) whose name was on the lips of everybody led the young girl to take to Veena practice under the guidance of one Alagasingarayya, a Vainika of some ability who also held some office (in the Mercantile Bank.) Within three years she had attained easy mastery therein and made her mark as a worthy successor of the renowned Gowri in Veena playing. As if to fill up any want in her equipment, Balakrishnayya one of Gowri's disciples who was a vocalist and vainika noted for his special knowledge of padas came on the scene subsequently and provided young Dhanam with training in a rare stock of such compositions among others. Dharmapuri Subbaraya Iyer of *Javali* renown was yet another to add to the enrichment of her stock.

Her unique attainments brought for her the admiring regard of almost all the galaxy of musical stars of her time such as Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer, Sarabha Sastry, Krishna Bhagavatar and Patnam Subramania Iyer. Thirukkodikavil Krishna Iyer's unbounded enthusiasm* for her art

*Once after hearing Dhanam playing *Sahana raga* in an assemblage of vidwans and music lovers, Thirukkodikaval Krishna Iyer

used to take often the shape of public acknowledgement that his rendering of some ragas like *Sahana* and *Surati* had not a little to do with the inspiration derived by hearing Veena Dhanam. The late Govindaswami Pillay of Trichy had nothing but adoration for her music. Not only the musical veterans but also many a ruling prince and provincial governor appear to have extended their patronage to her art, including the Gaekwar of Baroda and the Maharajahs of Travancore, Mysore and Durbanga and Lord Charmichael and Lord Ripon. She was also for some time on special service in the palace at Vizianagram and tutor to H. H. the Junior Maharanee of Travancore. Even to-day, her residence is a place of pilgrimage for musicians big and small to hear the old veteran's enchanting melodies. It is a common sight especially on Friday evenings to see this old woman, with one foot in the grave, and unconcerned about her surroundings, endlessly chewing her pan and pouring forth from her Veena exquisite melodies, and enlivening the group of admirers around her by biting sallies now and then against any incautious remark of an unwary listener.

You look, in her ragas, more for their charming and expressive shapeliness, with fine imagination and facile rendering, absolute melody and exquisite touches, choice phrases and shades of expression, leisurely movement and lovely effect, rather than for extensive or exhaustive elaboration. In compositions, her stock is as varied as it is considerable. In addition to the masterpieces of Tyagaraja and Kshetriya, she has a far larger number of those of Dikshitar, Syama Sastri and others than most other artists reported to have been moved to such an extent as to present to her on the spot the valuable shawl which he himself had got by way of gift a few days before.

professionals. In her programme you can also find rare masterpieces little known to others or long forgotten. If you want, you can have a whole performance of padas and padas alone.

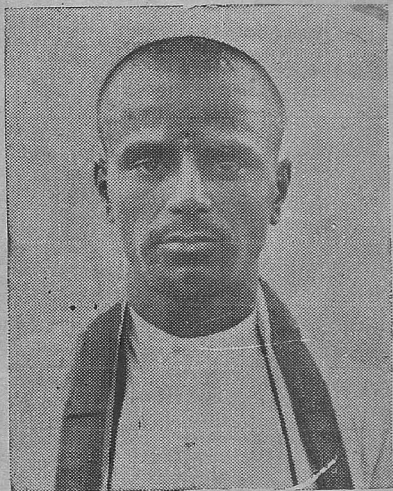
Her emphasis on *raga bhava* is so great that the tala aspect is but secondary and unobtrusive in her music. Not infrequently you may see her taking full liberties untrammelled by any conventions about the syllables of the *Sahitya* being in their respective places within the *avarta*, of a tala and exploiting to the full all available space for the display of *raga bhava*. You won't see any mridanga for accompaniment or a *Pallavi* in her performance.

The family tradition for rich and sweet music is being continued to some extent in her daughters and granddaughters. But much of what Veena Dhanam knows appears to be a sealed book even to her own daughters. With all her art, she has no urge nor can she be easily tempted to give much of the benefit of her vast knowledge to others. Unique in her stock and style, Veena Dhanam is perhaps the first and last of her type and he who has not heard her has not heard the best of Carnatic music.

MUSIRI SUBRAMANIA IYER

Among the well-known vocalists on the platform at the present day, two or perhaps three, appear to enjoy the widest popularity and Mr. Musiri Subramania Iyer is one of them. A lean young figure, with a dark complexion and a religiously small tuft of hair on the crown of his head, he strikes you even at first sight as a cultured gentleman among the professionals and always greets you with engaging humility and over-suavity of manners.

The chief source of attraction in his music is his voice. Among the well-known platform musicians of the male sex, his is perhaps the only voice that is rather high pitched, sharp and, in a limited sense, of the feminine type though without its characteristic sweetness. In the matter of pliability and expressiveness, there is not much wanting in it. It gets an added charm in the thick and thin shades that he occasionally gives to it—a feature rarely cultivated by professionals. Its range is comparatively wide and it invariably brings down the cheers of the audience, when he takes with ease the higher *Panchama* (in the *Tara Stayi*). It has in spite of its varying cadences come out on the microphone with much better results than those of many other musicians. His performances at the Madras Corporation radio very often bring in a request from the listening audience at the beach to the radio authorities to have his music continued longer than the scheduled time. He is one of the very few South Indian vocalists who appears to be greatly liked by audiences in North India as well, on account of his voice.



Musiri Subramania Iyer

Courtesy—Orr's Columbia House

If, along with these qualities, it had only a little more volume and innate resonance, how perfect and enchanting would it be! Musiri's occasional attempts to broaden and give volume to it are not always attended with very fruitful or pleasing results. It is more a sharp pencil, best suited to draw thin, minute and sometimes intricate designs of fancy, than a broad or medium brush to splash out luxurious paints in colourful portraits of emotion, which would charm you even at a distance. What a paradox in voice qualities! We can only blame that God of gifts who gives things in plenty but just short of that which would make them perfect—all in a tantalising manner!

Musiri is also one of those few musicians who have a good stock-in-trade in the matter of compositions of various kinds; and he is continuously adding to his store. He does not move in hackneyed grooves without *Manodharma*. He has to some extent a conscious lay out of plans and play of variegated imagery in his ragas. Curves and graces he has in plenty and some of them are well stressed in a characteristic manner. Though, as yet, no catchey style is observable, he has an individuality of his own. Perhaps no platform musician of a highly stylish type has, as yet, played any appreciable part in the shaping of his music and style. Nor can his art be said to have as yet much of that impressiveness and effect which are suggestive of sure and self-conscious mastery and depth. He handles, both *Vilamba* and *Madyama kala* pieces in their natural mode, without any insecure, over-speedy or unnatural drift in time or treatment. He is one of the few who sing a good number of Dikshitar's kritis with ease, grace and comfort.

In addition to his able rendering of the pieces which are favourites with present-day audiences he has also a knack of making some of the so-called old or hackneyed compositions appear fresh and interesting. His singing of the well-known "Nagu Momu Ganale" of Tyagaraja is an illustration of the fact that existing pieces by themselves are neither old nor new, except as are made to appear by particular artists. This piece in particular, had a brilliant exposition in the flute of the late Sarabha Sastri a faithful representation whereof is maintained by Sanjeeva Rao. It came again into special notice and popularity a decade or so later, with a new turn and colour given to it in the use of *Suddha Daivata* by the late Pushpavanam with his glorious voice, when its raga also seems to have been brought it into greater vogue and prominence than before. In Vedanta Bhagavatar it has taken a grandeur and majesty on account of the broad sweep of a magnificently ringing voice of his early career. Once again, it has come into unique prominence in Musiri. It has become so identified with him, that rarely a performance of his would be allowed to miss it and rarely does it fail to bring down for him the applause of the audience. The gramophone record of this song by him is reported to be the rage of the musical populace from Ganjam to Cape Comorin. His rendering of "Entha Veduks" is another instance of the Musiri touch in making old or obsolete pieces appear fresh and interesting. *Natakuranji*, *Hindola*, *Ketharagowla* and *Hamir Kalyani*, are a few among the many ragas that come out happy from him.

If you are able to observe in his manner an occasional sliding into a tinge of modernity or extraneousness that may not seem quite consistent with purist notions of

the classical Art you may pass it over as due perhaps to a slight lapse from perfect control over the youthful drive of a gifted and expressive voice and a little want of necessary circumspection in moments of enthusiasm. (Or it may have something to do with his conception of *bhava* in the development of *Sangathis*). Certain phases of his raga *Shanmukapriya* may be cited for instance. Even some of his favourite pieces are not sometimes free from it. It may not after all be impossible for him to avoid and steer clear of such minor shoals ; nor is he impervious to the higher ideals in the Art. Being only thirty-four years of age, he is young and able and having gifts and talents enough to ensure his popularity without the help of doubtful utility, there is nothing in the way of his chalking out a distinct style of his own and rising to the highest in the Art. One cannot be too well guarded in matters like this in musical criticism, lest they should be over emphasised to the point of prejudice—especially in these days, when standards in taste and appreciation are not highly developed and are changing, when groups and parties are not infrequently formed with violent likes and dislikes of particular favourites and modes and when reputations are sought to be made or marred without much of a proper basis or justification.

If cheers from the listening audience are any indication of a man's music and popularity, Musiri is a happy recipient of them in plenty—at times more than any others. It is not uncommon in an average audience, for many of the really appreciable and beautiful parts of a man's music to be left unnoticed, while minor excellences and mechanical feats are vociferously cheered, though pundits and

prudes among the audience may look on with a sneering reproof at the indiscriminate enthusiasm of the understanding gallery. These are oddities to be smiled over by a disinterested observer, who may only make notes but not take sides.

It is a pleasure for accompaniments to follow Musiri, as his high pitch in *sruthi* is an advantage and delight for them. A switch of the forearm and fingers to mark the *Usi* of a Tala, a forward bend of the body with narrowed eyes and pursing of lips when giving a thinner shade to the voice in a curve or gamaka, are the few mannerisms that are noticeable about him. With a perceptible sincerity and earnestness to do his best, his platform manners are on the whole good.

Born on the 9th April 1899 at Musiri in the Trichy District as the son of Sankara Sastri noted for his Sanskrit learning and musical tastes, Subramania Iyer got his initiation into music at about the age of 17 under Mr. S. Narayanaswami Iyer, an amateur musician, a Treasury officer and 1st Class Magistrate at Pudukkottah. After about two years of training under him he was for some time with Mr. Karur Chinnaswamy Iyer the well known Violinist. In 1921 he came under the influence of Vidwan T. S. Sabesa Iyer, a sishya of Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer and now head of the Rajah Annamalai College of Music. With his gifted voice and talents he rose to quick popularity and prominence.

Musiri is one of the few platform musicians who take an interest in the problems connected with the theory and practice of music. At any rate, he does not avoid conferences and meetings of expert Committees. Though

capable of forming opinions of his own, he does not like to be obtrusive or assertive in expressing them. He attends the performances of other musicians. With the background of a fair modern education up to the Intermediate course, he is one of the few who have got culture of an appreciable degree, higher than that of the average professional. On the business side of the profession—popular as he is—he is a gentleman, fair and reliable, without giving anxiety or worry to organisers of his performances. He is good, kind and amiable in company and friendship though a bit timid at the outset; and his rare character draws to him the esteem of all. With appreciable talents, sincerity, industry and other desirable traits of character, public and private, it is no wonder that Musiri is one of the favourites with the music loving public, particularly among the younger generation.

VENKATASWAMY NAIDU OF VIZIANAGARAM

India has been credited with a genius to so naturalise and utilise what little of cultural and artistic things that are accidentally taken in from other countries as to make them appear all her own. Nowhere has that genius been better illustrated than in its adoption of the violin and to South India belongs that credit. Stringed instruments of the 'bowing' variety are not uncommon in this country. But curiously enough, they are mostly to be found in the north while South India has taken hold of the Violin for the wonderful display of her music. In the innate quality of its sound, the Violin is not as exquisitely sweet or melodious as the Veena, Gotu or Sarangi. It takes a long time to attain proficiency in it and it requires considerable mastery to draw from it good melody. But it is highly expressive and in the manipulation of the strings of the lower octaves experts occasionally produce sounds somewhat resembling human voice. Above all, it is a handy and an easily portable instrument and that is no ordinary qualification for popularity of musical instruments in these days.

Though it appears to have been introduced in the South a long time ago yet it was in the hands of Anna Sastri and later of Tirukodikaval Krishna Iyer that it became very popular and its full possibilities came to be known to the public more widely than before. Karur Devudu Iyer was a fine Violinist who systematised the methods of Violin teaching. After them, the late Govindaswamy Pillai was the most outstanding figure who drew from that instrument an exquisiteness of melody unsurpassed by others; and echoes of the art of that master-mind



Venkataswamy Naidu

Courtesy—The Music Academy Madras

may be heard nowadays in his disciple Karur Venkatarama Iyer familiarly known as Papa. It is the chief accompaniment of the stringed variety in a South Indian musical concert. Though it began only as an accompaniment it has worked its way to be the principal of any instrumental music concert and the craze for solo chances among violinists is so great that their encouragement is not always found conducive to healthy and proper conception of its place and use as an accompaniment in musical concerts.

Violinists of great ability are found in appreciable numbers nowadays and among them Mr. Venkataswamy Naidu of Vizianagaram occupies an honoured place.

It was one evening at the fag end of December, 1927, when on the small platform of the All-India Music Conference at Madras, a dark figure with eyes blind, was found holding the audience spell bound by a remarkable play on violin and at the end of the performance the mixed crowd that listened to it clamoured for another chance being given to him, wondering all the time who that Orpheus was who could show such mastery of the art. It was Professor Venkataswamy Naidu of Vizianagaram. Though by that time he had long been in the field, he was not as widely known to the music loving public as he is now and in a sense he may be said to be one of the "finds" of the All-India Music Conference—that memorable session which set the ball rolling for the present sweeping renaissance in South Indian Music and which was unique as an occasion and opportunity to bring out the comparative merits of many of the known and less known musicians.

Venkataswami is an illustrious Andhra of the Dwaram family, the male members of which appear to have had military service as their profession and music as

their hobby. Born on the 3rd November 1893 at Bangalore Cantonment where his father and grandfather—themselves good violinists—were in charge of the garrison, he had the start of a musical heredity and atmosphere in the family concerts. His brother Krishnaiah Naidu who was also a violinist and an ardent disciple of the late Sangameswara Sastri gave him his early training in violin. But the two real gurus that seemed to have helped the young man to eminence were his rare intuition and grasp of whatever good music he happened to hear. He had the good fortune of hearing often in his impressionable years the late Sangameswara Sastri, Tirukodikaval Krishna Iyer and Nandigama Venkanna Pantulu and he seemed to have revelled in his later years in the music of Konerirajapuram Vaidyanatha Iyer and Govindaswamy Pillai of Trichy. He made his first appearance as a violinist in public at the age of thirteen when he had the rare opportunity and privilege of accompanying the late Venkanna Pantulu and became a regular professional from about 1913. The Dasara season at Cocanada is an occasion of musical festivities and Venkataswami as a favourite of that festival has been drawing crowded houses ever since. When in February, 1919 a Music College was opened at Vizianagaram, by the late Sri Vijayarama Gajapati Raj Maharaj, Mr. Naidu was chosen as Professor of Violin which post he has been occupying and adorning ever since, with great credit to himself and his patrons. He has been the recipient of much patronage in the shape of medals from many a Zamindar of Andhradesa and titles like *Gandharva Vidya Bhushana* and *Sangeetha Vidya Visarada* from the Rajah of Vizianagaram and the Pradhana Andhra Sangeetha Parishat respectively. He had the unique present of a violin costing about Rs. 650 in

1926 from the citizens of Vizianagaram and another more costly one valued at about Rs. 800 along with a diamond ring from the citizens of Vizagapatam recently, when the illustrious Sir Radhakrishnan made the present on behalf of the public.

The Professor has a good though not very varied stock of compositions. He plays with equal facility and mastery in all the three kalas, *Vilamba*, *Madhya* and *Dhruta* but prefers *Vilamba* to others as it gives ample opportunities to exhibit his melody and graces. There is nothing like a favourite raga or piece with him. 'KAPI,' BEHAG, KANADA, PURVAKALYANI, BEGADA and JENJUTI among the *Janyas* and 'SIMHENDRA MADYAMA' among the *Kartas* may deserve some special mention. He does not move in any fixed grooves and there is no lack of imagination either in him. With alluring touch and artless ease, he produces sweet melodies with appreciable gamakas and graces. He prefers *Vorikh* to "*Ravvai*". The instrument which was presented to him in 1931 and which he handles now, helps him a great deal to show his art to great advantage. It is said to be an exact reproduction of the Stradivarius* Violin of 1725 which was

* Antonio Stradivarius was a reputed Violin maker of Italy who lived for 93 years from 1644 to 1737. Himself a good Violinist, he used to test the sound qualities at every stage in the making of the instrument. Machine made Violins could not be tested in this manner. Hence hand made Violins were considered superior to them and prized most. Though Antonio Stradivarius is reported to have made a large number of Violins, only about a hundred of them are said to be found in the world to-day some in museums and most of them owned by private individuals. His Violins called 'strads' after his name were noted for their fullness, clearness and purity of tone and an exterior of surpassing beauty. Savart, a celebrated accoustician of Paris and others have proved that they were the

renowned for its fineness and fulness of tone and the qualities of which have been testified to by many a Violin virtuoso. He handles his instrument with a sure and steady hand and cares more for melody than for any spectacular display of skill or for acrobatics. He rarely overdoes anything and observes a desirable proportion in all that he plays. His feat of manipulating his fingers on the string beyond the ordinary range on the *Tara* and higher *Stayis* in perfect tune is noteworthy though it is in a way mechanical.

You may not find anything of a catchy or arresting style in his ragas. Except for the limited sphere of influence of a few talented musicians of Vizianagar and Bobbili, highly specialised musical centres like those of some of the southern districts with the hoary and living traditions of Tyagaraja and others, are perhaps still in the making—if not wanting in Andhradesa—so as to enable its music to get due attention paid to and emphasis laid on greater refinement and shapeliness than what are observable now, particularly in the style of rendering ragas.

Mr. Venkataswami too has yet to develop a distinct style of his own but with his frequent contact with the South ever since the All-India Music Conference of 1927 he has been showing appreciable improvement, while he has already got in him some of the essential features of high class music like good melody, grip over

best in the world. It is said that Stradivarius perfected his art of making Violins by 1714 and eleven years after, in 1725, he produced a Violin different from all those previously made by him as its sound qualities are spoken of very highly. The present Violin handled by Mr. Venkataswamy Naidu is a hand made copy of that Violin of 1725 and it was made by one of the most renowned houses of Violin makers in the world.

tala, good imagination and graces and freedom from the present day tendency to hurry. In short, sweet melody and facile graces are the outstanding features of his music now.

He is as good an accompanist as he is a solo performer. He has none of that obtrusive ego of the present day solo masters which makes and mars—more often the latter—the music of his principal when engaged for accompaniment in a concert. He tries his utmost to follow and help his principal and even when he is not given a chance he does not make a grievance of it; for no wise accompanist need grumble at it, as it is less work for him for the same pay. Self-composed and sure of his art on the platform, he makes the least movements of his body and at times, he is almost like a statue.

He seems to understand foreign music much better than most other professionals and he is remarkable for rendering one or two tunes of western music with their true and characteristic features. So also is his rendering of Hindusthani tunes. To help him in these matters, he has various varieties of bowing. He can easily produce various tones and cadences with their loud and soft variations.

He is a perfect gentleman among musicians. Simple and unostentatious in his manners, he is obliging and kind. He is also reputed to be a capable teacher and his disciples are sure of carving something out of their master's art by their contact with him. The stamp of culture is writ large on his face. Mr. Naidu's scholastic education is not much as there is the physical barrier of blindness of his eyes as though God willed that Mr. Naidu should devote all his life and undivided attention to his music only. Yet his knowledge of English and general culture are good

enough for one who had to learn through the eyes of others. He has appreciable knowledge of theory as well.

Though he is not of that type of professionals who are indifferent to problems in the theory and practice of music and though he occasionally contributes papers on them, he has not been actually found to take as active and large a part in the musical discussions of the conferences as one of his stamp can be expected to do. Mr. Venkataswami is a musician who has won his way up in his profession by a rare and real devotion to his art and it is no wonder that the Zamindars and public bodies in Andhra Desa vie with one another in honouring this illustrious countrymen of theirs who is popular not only in their own districts but also fairly known in the South as well.



Chembai Vaidyanatha Iyer

Courtesy—Orr's Columbia House

CHEMBAI VAIDYANATHA IYER

In the midst of a not very unjustifiable notion prevailing at large that South Indian musicians of the regular concert platform in general do not possess good and remarkable voices, if you come across an accepted exception to the rule, it is Mr. Chembai Vaidyanatha Iyer. He is one of the three platform male vocalists of the day who enjoy a wide measure of popularity and he is an illustrious representative of the Kerala group of musicians. Just in the prime of life and fair in appearance he has an engaging personality with an easily recognisable Malayalee cut of face, features and intonation in speech, and unconventional manners.

The charm of his music is in the richness of his voice. With good volume and beautiful reasonance, his voice combines rich melody and a ringing metallic timbre. It is clear and expressive and effortless in pouring out music of sweet sounds. Its mere resting or *karvai* on the *panchama* or *shadja* floods your ears with tuneful melody. It has got a vigour which few other voices among the professionals can boast of. It enables him to develop his *akara* and *swara prastrara* in the speediest manner possible at times with scintillating fireworks-like display. It is one of the few among the male voices that have shown good results in gramophone recording.

In short it strikes you at the outset as enviably the best and ideal voice for a musician. Intrinsically it may be so. But alas! it is again an irony that such a splendid voice does not appear to have been harnessed to more substantial and useful service to bring out the best in Carnatic music. With all its richness of tone, if it had been trained and disciplined also to display more of

necessary *gamakas* and graces, striking or impressive curves and modulation into thick and thin shades than what it is capable of now, South India could not have had better or more enjoyable music than his. At best it is trained to pour out in torrents—or naturally gifted with—admirable “*birkas*” which do produce some good and pleasing effects.

It looks as though a man is born rich but does not care to put his riches to the greatest possible use or advantage. Is it not again a paradox that while apparently uninviting voices are trained by hard practice to produce wonderful and unexpected results, rich voices do not always appear to have been put to the best use, from the point of view of the highest standards in Carnatic music? In the case of Chembai Vaidyanatha Iyer, it is no question of impossibility of improvement. With the natural richness, resonance and expressiveness of that voice of his, there is nothing beyond his reach in the highest realms and conceptions of the Art—if he cares to—and it is not too late either, as he is still in the prime of his life.

Vaidyanatha Iyer is a musician who handles his art with perfect self-confidence and composure. He renders his *vilamba* and *madyama* kala pieces, his *swara prastara* and other items of his music with easy control and vigour. He is sure of his grip over *tala* and delights in the company of the big guns among the accompanists. In fact, some of the older veterans among them are said to have taken a fancy to him from his early days and given not a little of encouragement to him. His “Raghuvara nanu” in PANTUVARALI, ‘Chesina dhella’ in THODI, “Parama pavana” in PURVA KALYANI and

'Brovavamma' in MANJI are some of the favourite and noteworthy pieces in his performances. Within limits his ragas are pleasing—particularly in the sweetness of the sound and *birka* effect though they may not have much of luxurious colour or stirring emotion that can be expected of such a voice. You may not find much of a well laid or attractive plan either in them. In his music—pleasant as it is—no distinct or catchy style is observable ; It is neither the smooth set groove of a stylish musician, nor a brilliant exposition of extraordinary or variegated *manodharma* or profundity of a master mind. In doing his *swara prastara*, his occasionally unique development of it in an extremely speedy *kala* with ringing clearness of tone—not attemptable by many other professionals, is a noteworthy feature which gets down the cheers of an admiring audience. Though he is not ordinarily credited with depth or profundity in the Art or with any remarkable variety or stock in the matter of compositions of the great masters, he is sure of what he knows and attempts to be elaborate in what he sings. There is not always that proportion and balance in his performances that would enable the audience to sit and listen through with unfailing interest. In his earlier days, he was not infrequently found to overdo some items and particularly his swara manipulation after the *kritis*, so much so that some of his performances used to have barely time for a few *kritis*, *raga alapana* and *pallavi*—all taking more than 4 hours without further time to take up other interesting items and miscellaneous ones which are the delight of large sections of people in a music hall audience and which are usually awaited with eager interest by them. But of late—be it said to his credit—under wiser influences and advice, he has been found to adjust himself to better

proportion in his performances as in the Music Conference concerts.

Mr. Vaidyanatha Iyer had perhaps no necessity to fight hard for popularity. It came to him easily enough as it comes to all good voiced musicians at the outset. Born in 1897 at Chembai, on the outskirts of Palghat in a gifted family where his father and grandfather were musicians of no mean repute, he had the good start of a musical heredity. He appears to have had his early training under his own father and came into easy prominence sponsored and encouraged not a little by many a prominent accompanying veteran of his early age. Beyond the strict requirements of his calling, higher ideals do not trouble him much. He cares very little for conferences and discussions over theory and practice in music. He is sure of his voice, his popularity and his remuneration and he is frank about the financial aspect of his profession. He is pious and religious to a degree and happily free from those weaknesses that beset and sometimes spoil attractive and popular professionals and as such his voice and vigour are unimpaired.

Though his manners may appear to be somewhat brusque he is not really rude and he is capable of warm friendship with and regard for those who understand his mannerisms. He lacks perhaps the outward polish and refinement that grace his co-professionals of the eastern districts. Nor does he appear to care very much for or to cultivate them. On the business side, though somewhat stiff at the outset, he is frank and straight in his dealings.

He appears to be independent by temperament—a little far too independent at times to be amenable even to the wishes of a listening audience. You generally dare

not advice or press him much with any suggestion, while on the platform. If you do, it is not unlikely that you may be met sometimes by a brusque reply that he knows his business well. But withal, he does not put on any sour, serious or solemn airs on the platform. He is often jocular and with a self-complacent laugh of his own, works the audience also to laughter at times with funny remarks. He has no unsightly contortions on his face either; and he sings in an easy effortless and full-throated manner. With the close fisted left arm held up or swaying up and down, his right arm and fingers beat the strokes of his *tala* on his thigh while his face is uplifted with confident cheerfulness to pour out his *birka* in plenty and on the whole his platform manners are agreeable. Very often he silences the most noisy audiences by timely flashes of his ringing voice and his voice is most of his music. The flood of its rich melody drowns his faults and makes you forget them or enjoy his music all the same.

Srimathi C. SARASWATHI BAI

Discerning minds may note in any system of developed music two essential aspects which are intended to be complimentary to each other. One is natural music of sweet sounds which alone satisfies the uninitiated in art and the other is the human art produced by intellect and imagination and conforming to certain systems, traditions, technique and standards and which alone gets the approval of fastidious pandits. It is perhaps the present day divorce of the one from the other that leads to excesses in each to the exclusion of the other and to anomalies in tastes and standards.

Women, children and singing birds may ordinarily be said to have natural music in abundance. Women vocalists are found to possess certain desirable advantages over men. They have pleasant voices to begin with and none of the contortions of the struggling male musicians. They do not fight with their accompaniments which usually follow them closely. They are free from acrobatics of any kind and they seldom overdo anything. On the whole their music is pleasant and enjoyable to a degree. With all these and in spite of some well known names of the past like Salem Godavari, Bhavani, Coimbatore Thayee Shanmuka Vadivu of Tiruchendur and Thiruvallur Rajayee you do not find now many woman vocalists who come up to the high conceptions in the art of Carnatic music. If at all you find one who combines natural music of sweet sounds and human art of appreciable quality it is the solitary figure of Srimathi C. Saraswathi Bai : and she too is not a musician of the regular concert type.

She is now about thirty-eight years of age. Short in stature and fair brown in complexion, with an intelligent



Saraswathi Bai

Courtesy—The Saraswathi Stores

face and expressive features, Sreemathi Saraswathi Bai is a Madwa Brahmin lady who was perhaps the first woman to invade the field of Kalakshepam which was till then solely in the hands of men.

Some twenty-two years ago, it was one of the marriage seasons at Kallidakurichi—the Brahmin Chettinad of the Tinnevely District as it then was—notorious for the lavish expenditure of its fortunes on spectacular marriages and choice musicians. A huge concourse of people were hovering in and about a pandal to hear the beginning of a Kalakshepam—the daring feat of a new fledged lady Bhagavatar—and then to decide whether to remain or disperse. For it was a place of fastidious tastes in music. Scarcely did the frail form of a young girl of fifteen or sixteen years of age sound her jalar and go through her opening song first when the scattered crowds closed into the pandal to its full with barely standing space for the musician herself. The organisers had no small difficulty in accommodating the vast crowds that sat through the performance with eager interest. It was Saraswathi Bai and the magic of her glorious voice told upon the listening crowds. From the age of thirteen or fourteen when she first came out to Madras with her art she has been able to retain that voice and her hold on public appreciation.

Her performances invariably draw crowded houses and the ladies' section of the audience is generally overfull. Ordinarily there may be room for doubt, whether the didactic purpose of a Kalakshepam is still kept up or served and whether it is not the special and interesting variety of music in the setting of a story that is the chief source of attraction. In the case of Saraswathi Bai there is no

doubt at all that it is her music that draws in the admiring crowds, though she appears to be serious about the religious and ethical aspects of Kalakshepam.

She is unrivalled in the gift of a rich voice and she has trained it to display good art as well. It has neither the piercing shrillness of a very high pitched voice nor the bass quality of a mannish one. It has got just the desirable medium volume and good resonance and audibility with mellifluous effect. With sweet melody it is amazingly clear and expressive. With a flawless tone and timbre its range is wide. Rich in *birka* it is not without *gamakas* and exquisite graces. Above all it has a natural "*jeeva*"—like a live wire—that gives those colourful and emotional effects that are not found in the average musician. She has her voice under perfect control and gives at times well regulated and beautiful thick and thin shades. With effortless ease she manipulates her *sangathis* in three octaves and produces scintillating display of melodious *birka*, and graces. She can begin and end anywhere in an octave in perfect tune and with sure mastery. Female voices are the favourites of the microphone in gramophone recording and Saraswathi Bai's is no ordinary favourite.

Born with rare musical talents as the only daughter of Gupti Rama Rao who was in railway service for long and who is retired now, she had the good fortune of a father boldly chalking out a musical career for her. She was trained by an able guru Mr. Krishnamachariar after her first lessons from Panchapakesa Iyer of Tanjore an accompanist of Krishna Bhagavatar. When she first attempted to appear in public as a Kalakshepam artist, she had to meet the prejudices and opposition of most of the

male musicians. The music world was then not as liberal as it is now. It is said that a performance of hers arranged by a music sabha at George Town had to be given up on the very day of the performance on account of the threatened boycott of the sabha by the professional male musicians. Still the young lady, her father, her tutor and all her well wishers kept on to their resolve. It was given to Murayur Shunmukam Chetty, a rich patron of art, to take a bold stand and arrange a performance of hers at his residence * at Mýlapore. Before a large assemblage of invited guests she made her mark and since then the tide turned in her favour.

Her exposition of the story is clear and engaging. She has her own mannerisms one of which is a characteristically long and undue stress on certain words. Her rendering of Sanskrit verses is appreciable enough for a lady.

But it is her music that is the predominant feature of her art. Not seldom you will find a demand from the audience for special *kritis* and other pieces in the midst of her story. She has one striking feature which few others have got. She has cultivated both the Carnatic and the North Indian systems of music so well that she is able to render them each in its own style. It is no wonder that she was able to please audiences in North India as well and to win titles like "Gayanapati" and "Keertanapati" from the late Pandit Vishnu Digambar of Gandarva Maha Vidyalaya of Poona in 1916 and from the late Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak in 1920—not to say of

*A house in the midst of a tope of coconut palms at Mundakanniamman Koil Street, Mr. Musiri Subramania Iyer happens to live there now.

the numerous prizes and medals of appreciation from various patrons and institutions in the South.

Her stock in the matter of compositions other than those special to her Harikatha is not inconsiderable. Though all kinds of pieces come out happy from her she is at her best in *Madyamakala* ones. You may not find in her an extensive elaboration of a raga as in the concert musician. Hers cannot be the music of the slow moving or leisurely type indicative of the profundity of a master-mind. But whatever she sings has got a vigour and *jeeva* due to her voice and good art and in the setting of a story they are of exquisite charm. There is no set groove about her music and she is not without *Manodharma*. She has her own limitations and she is fully aware of them. In spite of the best efforts she has not been tempted to step into the concert platform. Consciousness of one's own limitations is no ordinary virtue in a musician. With good balance and proportion she seldom goes beyond enjoyable limits in her music.

Popular as she is, she evinces interest enough in the higher ideals of the art. She attends and sometimes takes part in conferences and discussions regarding music. She is endowed with fair culture and she is still an earnest student constantly equipping herself and adding to her stock. She is agreeable and sociable in manners with the natural reserve of her sex. She attends and appreciates others' performances.

Curiously enough when women in general are happily free from contortions and overgesturing on the platform lady kalakshepam artists alone are found to go out of the way and imitate men. Perhaps kalakshepam having been the art of males for long, even their mannerisms appear to

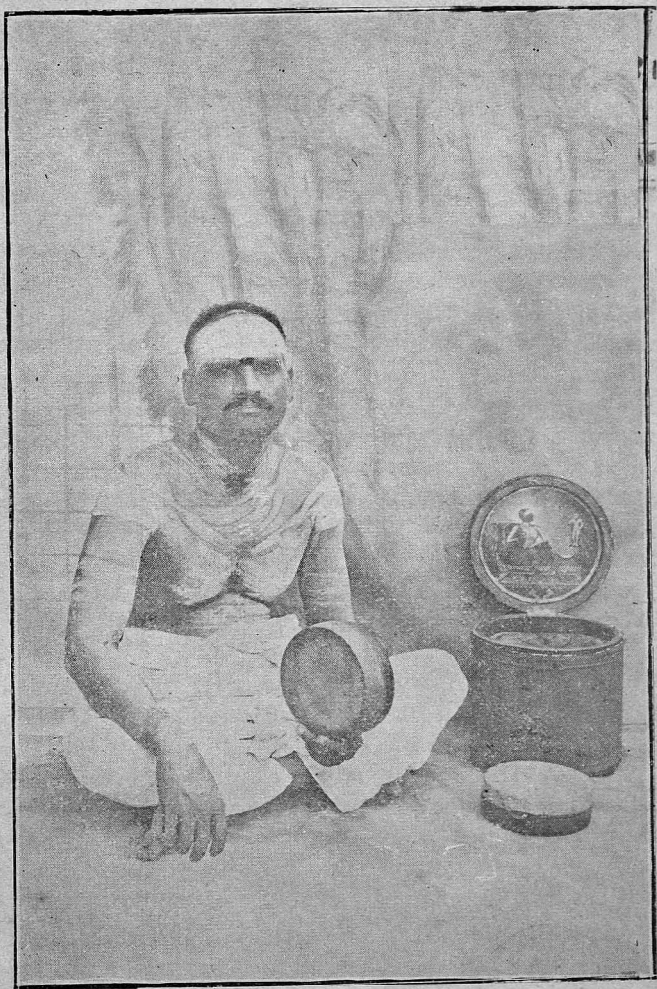
have been copied by the lady artists and Saraswathi Bai too does not seem to be any exception to the rule. Expression of *bhava* by gestures is no doubt very important in kalakshepam performances as in speech and music. A kalakshepam artist too like a stage actor has often to depict particular characters in the story faithfully and in so doing adopt to some extent their gestures and language. But on the whole women with their natural charm of figure and features can as well adopt whenever possible more graceful forms of *abhinaya*—if necessary borrowed from the shastra itself—rather than go in always for imitating mannish gestures; and one of the famous Bhagavatars of the past appears to have used *abhinaya* to the best advantage.

These are small things generally overlooked in the charm of her music. She is perhaps one of the two Bhagavatars whose kalakshepams have got an honoured place among musical entertainments on account of their high quality of music and there is not another among women to rival her in her art and popularity.

DAKSHINAMURTHI PILLAI

'He who invented the *Mridanga* ought to have been a rare genius' is the opinion of an illustrious scientist of our country, interested in research work in sound. Percussion instruments in music in this county are numerous and among them the "*mridanga*" is the best. Even as the Veena is associated with Goddess Saraswathi and the flute with the Divine Krishna so is *Mridanga* coupled with the name of Lord Nandikeswara. It is a wooden cylindrical hollow, tapering towards the ends and covered on both sides with tight-fitting leather. The sounds that are produced therefrom are very pleasing and interesting. For any really enjoyable music you do not require more than a *tambura* and *mridanga* as accompaniments and if necessary you may have another stringed instrument as a matter of some relief. The *mridanga* is capable of being tuned to the *sruthi* and when in perfect tune its *nada* or sound invariably brings in that gripping musical atmosphere or *melakattu* which enables the musician to go through his performance with a swing. It is also capable of giving out a pleasing variety of sweet sounds including the *humkara* which as an undertone adds not a little to the richness of its music. It has been and is even now, the chief accompaniment in tala in South Indian musical concerts and *Mridangam* experts of great skill and ability are not a few at the present day and three perhaps among them appear to stand out most conspicuously for their wide and universal renown.

Accompaniments in any system of music are intended to follow and help the principal musician and embellish the music of the concert. But, curiously enough, accompani-



Dakshinamoorthi Pillai

ments in South India and particularly of the *tala* variety have of late been allowed to develop to such monstrous proportions as to become fighting rivals to the principal musician on the platform with their killing acrobatics and inordinate solo displays. It need hardly be said that the major portion of the audience do not and cannot follow the technique and intricacies of such performances. But all the same, the cheers of the audience are ready and vociferous in proportion to the vitiated taste of the gallery and the length and noisiness of the display. One Mridangam is a sufficient *tala* accompaniment for any concert. Add to this a number of other accompaniments like *kanjeera*, *dolak*, a *moorsing* and *konnakole*—and you have a regular circus performance of the lion, tiger, bear, wolf and all the other wild animals vociferously brawling and fighting with one another with the poor lamb of a vocalist quivering in their midst and the heart and soul of Indian music—melody and *Ragabhava*—dished up beyond redemption. The *tala* enthusiasts have stopped short of only one climax, namely that of having a *kanjeera* or *mridanga* solo in the place of vocal music for a concert. It will be no surprise if some commercial genius were to take up that idea seriously and put up such shows. The vitiated tastes would have grown worse but for the timely staying hand of the All-India Music Conference of 1927 and the renaissance it ushered in. It is an irony that while the North-Indian mind delights in having more than one stringed instrument to enrich the exquisite melody of its music, the South Indian taste—fortunately for a time only—revelled in putting upon the platform a number of percussion instruments and accompaniments of the unmusical variety to kill with their noise even the little melody of the poor voice of the average musician.

Not much purpose will be served by asking the why and how of this excessive development of the tala aspect. Suffice it to say that with the passing away of the great masters of yore and their habit of having their own agreeable set of accompaniments and keeping them in their proper place, accompanists from distant places, with differing tastes, temperaments and training came to be clubbed together and each had his mind on winning laurels for himself at the expense of the other. Instead of being co-operators they developed into serious competitors and in the general melee, the tala giants gained the upperhand in the kingdom of music. The transfer of patronage from knowing princes and patricians to the motley crowd of the streets left them free from any healthy control and they began to reign supreme. They did not and could not mind if the goddess of good, melodious and enjoyable music, bereft of the harmonious and subordinate co-operation of her accompaniments, abdicated her throne for the confused noise of the fighting elements that strutted on the stage in the name of science.

The unthinking crowds always cheer their heroes of the fight whether in war or in music. As is the supply so is the demand and *vice versa*. It is a vicious circle. In turn it reacted on the music of the vocalists who in their struggle to hold their own against the onslaughts of the redoubtable drummers had to lose their *raga bhava* for a better grip over *tala*. The situation created in turn a type of master-mind among vocalists which in its desire to conquer the tala giants did gain its object to some extent but well nigh lost the soul—namely that of *ragabhava*.

The success and popularity of a musical concert should ordinarily depend upon the standing and ability of the

principal vocalist. But South India is noted for their depending mainly and sometimes solely upon the name of a tala accompanist and he is no other than Mr. Dakshinamoorthi Pillai of Pudukotah. He is the virtual ruler of any musical concert of note and he ensures a crowded house. Perhaps in his field none deserves that position more than he. He is a born genius in and master over the *laya* aspect in music. Perhaps his fee is rather high for an accompanist. But none grudges to pay him and his presence pays in turn.

About fifty eight years of age, well-built in constitution and rather dark of complexion with a round crop of short hair covering the top of his skull and holy ashes adorning his forehead, he meets you with his joint palms uplifted and with his never failing "Andavan" on his lips, and enlivens you with his quaint humour and broad smile. He has to be studied in two stages—the earlier Dakshinamoorthi, the dominant autocrat of the concert platform with his redoubtable kanjeera and the later figure with his wonderful touches in mridanga, a true accompanist, guide and helper in a concert.

He was born of a Vellala family at Pudukkotah in December 1875. His father (Ramaswami Pillai) and grandfather have been in charge of the treasury and his uncle Yoganandaswami was a palace doctor in that State. Till his age of eighteen or nineteen he appears to have spent his life roaming about without aim or avocation except taking pleasure in driving carts. Subsequently he was taken into military service where he was for about three years and acted also as aid-de-camp to the then ruling prince. It was during this period that his instinct for tala began to show itself out and he is said to have

delighted his friends by playing tala jathis on his military cap among other things. That led him to learn *ghatam* play under a 'Pandaram' and he appears to have practised it till about twenty-five years of age. Coming then under the influence of Manpudia Pillai—the founder of the race of tala giants—he learnt the secrets of his trade as a tala accompanist in Mridangam and Kanjeera and mastered his art therein.

It is with the last mentioned instrument that his name was for long identified. It may be said that what Manpudia Pillai began in *kanjeera* Dakshinamurthi brought to perfection. If the guru showed to the world that there was an instrument like that capable of being adopted as an accompaniment in a musical concert the disciple demonstrated the highest possibilities of the same.

If to connoisseurs of real art, the *kanjeera* appears to be more a nuisance than a musical instrument, it is not the fault of Mr. Pillai but the uninviting nature of the instrument—like a bad voice. It is a round bowl with its flat bottom made of the tough skin of the wall lizard and a few bells attached to the frame of the bowl. Except noises of varying degrees it has not much music of its own; nor is it capable of being perfectly tuned to any *sruthi* though an occasionally mild stroke may appear to approach it. If blind enthusiasts tell you that in the hands of this and that expert it shows wonderful musical sounds, you may take it to be a kind of sentimentality and self-delusion and a sad commentary on South Indian idea of melody in music. If you give a hard *chapu* on it, the sound will resemble somewhat the explosion of a wall cracker. At best the manipulation of a kind of swift *nereval* combined with the jingling

of the bells in it, is perhaps the most appreciable and when played in combination with *mridangam* within limits it creates an agreeable sensation. In fact some varieties of rhythmic elaboration in Carnatic music are such as to appear exceedingly interesting even if they are played on such materials as the wooden pieces of singing beggars. But that should not be confused with the requisites of an accompaniment in the highly refined music of the concert platform, which is intended to embellish the art of the principal musician. No instrument can have a place as such accompaniment unless the musical quality of its sounds is so intrinsically good as to add to the melody, resonance and richness of the concert music and the most sentimental lover of the *kanjeera* cannot claim such virtues for it. Dakshinamoorthi himself has no illusions about it. It is with an instrument of such unedifying qualities, that he had to show his genius and he did show it though how far the instrument enabled him to embellish concert music with melody and resonance might have been a debatable point. Even in the 'circus' performances he used to be the dominant leader. Of course more than anybody else he shared in the then prevailing urge to prove his worth and invincible mettle among the gladiators of the concert ring. He was thorough in what he did and won the unfailing applause of admiring crowds. A combination of his *kanjeera* and Alagunambia Pillai's *mridanga* however had been for long an attractive feature and the most paying element of musical concerts.

It is with no ordinary relief and pleasure that music lovers have watched and welcomed his taking up of the *mridanga* for the display of his talents. Though he has not given up the *kanjeera* for good, he is now seen to handle the *mridanga* more than the other. Though for some time, his

handling of this instrument too was a little hard, he has of late developed nice and appreciable touches, leaving off most of his youthful excesses and fighting tendencies. Not infrequently he is found to manipulate the sounds of his instrument to match the varied *sangathis* of the vocalist. Paradoxically enough or as an exception he who used to rule over circus performances with the noisy *kanjeera* has also been seen often to be capable of such mellow playing on *mridanga* as to adjust himself to the Veena performances of the Karakudi Brothers.

For one thing, his precision and mastery over *tala* is unmistakable. Few have got as sure a *Kala Nirnaya* as he; and it is unshakable even in the midst of the most labyrinthian intricacies of a *Pallavi* or *Swaraprasathara*. To this precision and mastery, he adds a deftness of execution which is marvellous. He can develop and display his *laya-vinyasa* in the speediest manner possible with ease; and at times he carries on long *avarthas* with bare strokes far between, which not infrequently are the bugbear of a slipshod vocalist. You can never catch him napping or slipping and he is all alert. He puts his heart and soul into his play and loses himself in it. His *theermanams* or finishes are crisp and of an interesting variety, from the simple to the elaborate and subtle. His solo displays are invariably instructive and interesting with scintillating *jathi* or *nadai bedhas* and *nerevals*.

But he is also subject to changing moods, and is not without enjoyable eccentricities. He would now appear to follow his principal closely with mild *teka*, then scare him with hard strokes far between or throw across him surprising hurdles of rhythmic variations, at times bluff him with an empty wave of the hand when you would

expect a stroke and sometimes drown everything else in continuous and reverberating cascade of an elaborate *nereval* and *tha-thin-gi-na-thoms* with rolling eyes and assertive turns of the head all around and humming a characteristic undertone of enjoyment all along. He has no patience with those who are slippery or shaky in tala; and if he finds the principal musician one such he makes mince-meat of him.

He is now on 'the [whole a true accompanist following the principal musician neatly, crisply and with simple touches.

In the best of his moods his touches on *mridanga* are sweet and superb, and you will wonder whether it is the same Dakshinamoorthi of the reverberating *kanjeera* of former years. It may be a surprise to many to know that he has no sympathy with unnatural pallavis and their outlandish starting points and excessive *Thathingina-thoms* and that he is advising his disciples to avoid excesses and also to try to follow the chief musician as much as possible.

Whether it is the result of his innate good tastes, or his *bhakthi* on Lord Muruga or the new spirit of the present renaissance or a shrewd understanding of his business side to suit himself to changing tastes, Dakshinamoorthi of the present day is different from the self-same person of a decade back. Perhaps he is a product of his environments.

Religious by temperament, he is said to have spent much of his earnings on charitable purposes. In private and on the platform he has a fund of humour. While playing his instrument he shows visible enjoyment of the music of the principal artist. You can rarely draw him to a

discussion on the *lakshana* aspect of his art ; and he can never be persuaded to take part in a conference, or discussion or controversy in music. He will invariably tell you that "Andavan" has intended him only to exhibit what art he knows and not to concern himself with other things which ought to be left to the vocalists, vainikas and the like.

When all is said Dakshinamoorthi has been the dominant figure and leading luminary for long in *Kanjeera* and *Mridanga* and perhaps he is a type in himself in the combination of genius, merits, defects and eccentricities. If you want a paying performance from the point of view of gate collections even at the present day you cannot but think of him first and foremost.



C. Subramania Pillai

SUBRAMANIA PILLAI OF CONJEEVARAM

A genius or a mastermind in any walk of life is first a product of the times before he contributes something of his own and makes his influence felt on his age and surroundings. Mr. C. Subramania Pillai of Conjeevaram is one such, and he represents a particular phase of development in Carnatic music. No survey of South Indian music and no study of present platform musicians—however broad and light they may be—can fail to take account of him.

The sister's son of the famous Dhanakoti of Conjeevaram, Nayana Pillai—as he is also called—was born and brought up in a family noted for its high musical traditions. Strangely enough he did not take to music seriously during his boyhood. It was not till he grew to seventeen or eighteen years of age that he began to pick up training in it. He is said to have had his real inspiration and earnestness in the art from a Sanyasin* who was an expert in music with many a treasured secret in its *laya* aspect and who was chiefly responsible for initiating him into its mysteries. He had also for a few years the benefit of the influence over him of Ramachandra Bhāgavatar of Ettyapuram, (who had the illustrious Pushpavanam also for his disciple.) Though Nayana had not much of regular training under him, he was constantly in his company (when he was at Conjeevaram) following him closely wherever and whenever he was giving tuition in music to his disciples there. By such contact with him he learnt a good deal including many *apūrva* ragas and

*Is reported that his name was Kumaraguru and that he was a *sahapati* (co-student) with Manpoodia Pillai in the practice of music.

modes of *Swaraprasthara* in them and some knowledge of Dikshitar's compositions. In the subsequent development of his talents and shaping of his music his collaboration with the well known Pakkiri Pillai of Mannargudi who left his original 'Dowl' practice for his konnakkole had been of no ordinary significance. Nayana Pillai appears to have delved into the *laya* aspect of music more and more by himself aided by his study of the ramifying variety of *talas* in the 'Thiruppugazh' of Arunagirinathar. Nearing the middle age in life, he is a well-known platform musician with a broad face, fairly well built constitution and rather dark of colour. He draws fairly crowded houses and he and his art are factors to be reckoned with.

His music is not a little dependant on the nature of his voice apart from other factors. With appreciable volume and audibility it has a vigour of its own. It is doubtful whether it has much of innate melody or resonance. It is expressive to some extent. But it does not appear to be very servicable or to have been trained to modulate thick and thin shades, or display fine curves or exquisite graces. With a temperamental want of softness and elegance, his voice and training with obsession in *tala* have on the whole contributed to make his mastermind delight in building up of amazingly wonderful steel-frame structures of spectacular sky-scrapers, rather than enchanting villas and breezy mansions in the midst of broad open grounds of undulating green, decorated with waving and colourful foliage and flowers of ornamental trees and plants.

One thing that strikes you as the most appreciable in his music is his rendering of *Kritis*. He handles a large stock of them. With a crispness, vigour and finish they have got a bracing touch of his own. You can hear a large number of them without satiety. He has not a little been responsible

for bringing into vogue a considerable number of pieces which were previously obscure. He appears to have learnt many of them with the help of Jalathrangam Rame-niah Chetty of Madras from the Wallajapet family of musicians—who are descendants of a sishya of Tyagaraja and repositories of a large stock of his compositions. To Nayana belongs the credit of presenting those compositions with more refinement and effect than what they had in the hands of the Wallajapet musicians.

His “janaki ramana” in *Suddha Seemanthini*, “Mama-vasathatham” in *Jaganmohini*, “Ranidi radhu” in *Mani-rung*, “Paramathmuduvelugu” in *Vagadiswari*, ‘Budhi radhu’ in *Sankarabharna* and ‘Vinatha sutha vahana’ in *Jayanthesanai* are a few among the many pieces that are noteworthy in their rendering by him, as also his ‘Palnisu-kamakshi’ in *Madyamavathi* (by Syama Sastry). He has also a number of interesting ‘Thiruppugal’ songs’ in rare ragas.

You may not find much of attraction in his ragas or *raga bhava*; nor does he seem to set much store by them. Not that he sings ragas less, but that what he sings may be suggestive more of the *Swaragnani* in him than an artist who can sway your heart to emotion, with lively shades, imagery and graces. As the bedrock of musical learning in South India *swaragnana* is of special importance and no musician will be worthy of note if he is poor or slipshod in it. It is a powerful factor and it works wonders in music. But it all depends upon the realisation of the true purpose for which it is to be utilised and the use to which it is actually put. Yet, you may occasionally hear him rendering his ragas like HARIKOMBHOJI and KARAHARAPRIYA to an appreciable extent. He handles

a number of *apūrva* ragas as well like ANDOLIKA, AMRITA VAHINI, and JAGANMOHINI. His use of the sound "yah"⁽²⁾—a none too elegant mannerism of his,—superficial as it may seem, is yet pointed enough to catch his admirers among some amateurs and professionals for worse imitation.

The mainstay of Nayana's performance appears to be in his *Swara* singing. Even his kritis, sprightly as they are, appear to be very often mere pegs to hang his *swara*prastara on. Within limits it is enjoyable. But he hangs it on to almost every Kriti of his and pretty long ones too. He appears to have firm faith in it, whatever you may think or say about it. (As a double edged weapon, *Śwaragnana* with natural music and *raga bhava* works out lively and beautiful art and without them may drive music into somewhat cut and dry jathis.) Withal, Mr. Pillai's *swara* singing—when in reasonable proportions—has got an arrestingly racy spiciness about it. His style of *Swara* singing in the piece 'Amba Paradevathe' is particularly interesting.

The *Pallavi* is the forte of Nayana Pillai and the music world identifies him with it. It is an important item in a programme of South Indian Music and represents the scholarly as well as the purely *manodharma* or creative aspect of the music and musician, as it is intended to bring out prominently his training in and mastery over *tala*, *swara* and *nereval*, in addition to his *manodharma* and hold over *raga bhava*.⁽³⁾ Roughly, it con-

(2) Of late he is observed with less and less of that mannerism.

(3) No definition or detailed description is intended to be given.

sists in taking up a sentence or short piece of *sahitya* in a particular *raga* and *tala* and rendering it in all possible variations and hanging on to it a copious variety of consistent *swara sanchara* and *nerevals* in many a rhythmic variation or *nadaibedha* within the *tala*. A long time measure is taken up first and then speeded up into *mad-yama kala* and the whole feat is done in the two *kalas*. An exhaustive *pallavi* in the hands of experts may take up hours and an enjoyable *pallavi* in an ordinary concert may occupy twenty minutes to half an hour after the *alapana* of the main *raga*. Discerning artists say that except in specially organised tests of skill, an enjoyable *pallavi* in a concert platform ought to be taken up in a well known *tala*,—in a reasonable time measure from a fairly perceptible starting point and with the *sahitya* unencumbered by too many words: and that the *Swara Sancharas* and rhythmic variations—however subtle they may be—ought to have a natural and continuous flow in full *raga bhava*.

Unfortunately for Carnatic music, of late, some excesses had crept in, mostly on account of the influence of the over developed *tala* aspect and accompaniments. Instead of *laya* being made to subserve general music, the latter had to adjust and shape itself to the steel-frame *jathis* of the *tala* variety; and *Swaragnana* being a fickle mistress, deserted *raga bhava* and took to dry *jathis*. Over emphasis on *tala* and *swara* came to obscure good tastes and natural music; and the canker set in not only in the *Pallavi* but also in other items of music as well. Add to this the fighting tendency between the principal musician and accompaniments and the resulting urge in them to hoodwink and outdo one another. Out of the

way talas and unnatural time measures, outlandish starting points and sometimes cumbersome *sahitya* of too many words came to be taken up while bafflingly pre-prepared, intricate and difficult hurdles of swara groupings and rhythmic variations were sprung up as surprises against one another with cutting emphasis, and excessive "*tha-thi-gina-thoms*" that belonged more to the field of the drummer than the singer.

Be it said to the credit of Nayana Pillai, that after the great names who glorified the art in the past, he is the only figure (or perhaps one of the two) at the present day, devoting considerable attention and special study to the subject and displaying great skill in it. The music world may be indebted to him to a degree for drawing pointed attention through his art to the importance of this scholarly aspect and unique feature of South Indian music. Those who are interested in it may have many a point to take in by hearing him. The unshaky and sure fixture of his time measures, his power and deftness of execution, his scintillating piles upon piles of *Swara* groupings and rhythmic variations of intricacy and *nerevals*, his artful manipulation of the graded "*Mukthayippu*" (a kind of refrain—after a *Sanchara*—with the *Sahitya* or *jeevaswara* of the raga) in *avarthas*, full, half, quarter and so on, finishing with a sweeping *nereval* and final *mohara* or *theermanam*—these and other features are highly noteworthy in him. If, with all these, his art is sometimes found by discerning minds to be somewhat on controversial grounds, it is perhaps due to the call or demand and necessity of the times to cope with the accompanying gladiators of the concert ring, that lured him irresistibly into the excesses of the provocative pallavi, not unmingled with an inner urge—to show

off his mastery over *tala* and the vast possibilities of the *laya* aspects therein. And then his limitations in natural gifts of voice and temperamental elegance have to be taken into account. With all his shortcomings, there are not wanting people to admire him for his prowess in all that he sings.

The *laya* aspect in music has been so highly developed in South India that its mysteries and ramifying technique have often exercised their fascination over many a master mind in the past so as to makes his music full of obsessions in it and tempted him to import precisely calculated and elaborately prepared *tala jathis* as such into his art—not only in singing but also in compositions. (The influence of the *Thavil* practice in Nadhaswaram music is said to have been one among the many factors that have contributed to its development). Some were attracted to it instinctively for its own sake and some with a view and out of necessity to equip themselves well enough to cope with the accompanying giants on the platform. Nayana appears to be something of both.

In tackling with the problem of the accompanying giants dominating the platform, other master-minds too, such as the late Konerirajapuram Vaidyanatha Iyer (and to some extent Govindaswami Pillai also) had been known to take the field before him. They gained their mastery over it in their own ways, but on fair and familiar grounds with their grip over *Swaragnana* and *tala* and without at the same time losing, in the exigencies of the struggle, their hold on the essentials of good and enjoyable music and also developed distinct styles of their own, rich in *raga bhava*. With their own natural instincts and good

tastes they had the corrective influences of the great classic master-musicians of their early days for their aid in the shaping of their music. Nayana perhaps overshot the mark a little. Apart from his instinct to display the mystifying technique of *layavinyasa* his natural urge to prove his invincible mettle among the accompanying gladiators, probably led him, not only to outdo them in their own art, but also to take up ways and means somewhat new and untrodden. His own researches and the help of his good friends like Pakkiri Pillai stood him in good stead. Apparently he won his kingdom and in the very victory over his baffling technique could not help losing the soul (of natural music and *raga bhava*). Now that the problem has lost much of its former acuteness with the changing times and tastes Nayana too with all his strength of conviction is bound to change for more appreciable art.

He is sure of his ground in the midst of the most redoubtable among the accompanying giants. He has been the unshakable and dominant leader of many a 'circus' performance, (with a number of tala accompaniments) and he is perhaps the only one who can get on happily and unperturbed with the *konnakole* as an accompaniment. In his researches he has been able to go beyond the field of regulation talas ordinarily in vogue. All credit is due to him for the same and it is to be hoped that they will add substantially to the beauty of good Carnatic music. The *laya* aspect in our music, in spite of any tendency to over-develop it, is not any the less important. It is only those who have the strongest foundations in tala who are able to lay out broad plans and produce impressive art with comfortable handling of *Vilamba kala* in particular. Only, the *tala* has to be kept merely as a visible

boundary or hedge and not allowed to obtrusively interfere with the freedom and beauty of the growing crop.

Whatever may be your impression or appreciation of Nayana's art, you cannot but be struck by a kind of atmosphere in his performances different from that of others. A display of much learning, skill and power with not a little laboriousness about it, is a common feature in them, neither enabling the audience in general to get swayed by any exquisite or satisfying emotion nor allowing them to make light of it. If they cannot understand or follow him they keep quite with a complacent notion that there is something there beyond their comprehension. Much of their enjoyment is expressed in their cheers when the display is at its longest and most acrobatical, and in discussing among themselves as to who among the musicians on the platform has slipped somewhere in the manipulation of swara and tala. You will find the accompanists including the biggest guns among them, unusually on the alert and on their guard with him and perhaps more on their defence against surprises than playing with a spirit of freedom and buoyancy.

Nayana is by himself a man of strong convictions. He has firm faith in his mission of bringing out the importance of the *laya* aspect as such. He even feels it a grievance that people do not give as much attention to it as they do for other things in their talks and discussions about music. But so far, curiously enough he has not been found to take active interest in conferences and discussions regarding the theory and practice of music. Perhaps he is obsessed by a feeling that there may not be many among the average professionals who would properly appreciate his points of view and with whom he could pro-

fitably discuss though he has great regard for a few of them. If you talk to him in private you will find him courteous and willing to discuss matters with you.

When all is said, Nayana is a veteran and a dominant figure in the world of South Indian Music. May it not be impossible or too late for him—if he cares to—to apply his great talents and energy, hitherto engaged in a rather subordinate field in music, to find pastures fresh and new in more appreciable and essential fields of Carnatic music!



Nadhaswaram Veeruswami Pillai

Nadhaswaram VEERUSWAMI PILLAI

Among the wind instruments of the piping variety, the Nadhaswaram (or Nagaswaram as it was originally called) in South India is a unique and interesting one. It is as ancient as it is common to every nook and corner of this part of the country. Indian life is full of ceremonials and festivities religious and social, and there are few festivities without Nadhaswaram music forming a part of them. There is scarcely a town or village worth the name which has not got a temple and there is scarcely a temple or mutt of note which has not got a piper attached to it. Remarkable indeed is this method by which music has been preserved by our forefathers. Even if all the vocalists and other instrumentalists of the ordinary concert platform were to die out to-day, Carnatic music will still live in this unique organisation of Nadhaswaram music.

After the music of the lullaby at the cradle by the grand dames in a house, Nadhaswaram is perhaps the first and earliest type of refined music that every child gets accustomed to in a village in South India. It is perhaps the only indigenous instrument which, while giving high class art, engages the attention of large masses of people in the open air unlike vocal and other instrumental music which can be enjoyed only by limited audiences at a time.

It is simple in its make with a long wooden pipe tapering towards one end and a mouthpiece made of reed attached to it at the top. Simple as it is, it is remarkable for its sound. Rich and resonant, it is highly pleasing and there seems to be no parallel to it in its tonal qualities. Its volume and audibility are such as can be heard furlongs off. Next only to the human voice it is highly expressive.

When you are asleep in the front verandah of a house in a village, you will occasionally feel a kind of indescribably enchanting melody gently waking you up and creeping through your ears in an exquisitely agreeable mannner. It is the delicious music of this unique instrument played far away in the midnight procession of a marriage party or temple festival floating far and wide through the still atmosphere of the midnight hour .

Music as played in the Nadhaswaram has its own characteristics. You may not find in it the average programme of an ordinary music concert. *Raga alapana* at great length, *Pallavi*, *Nereval* and *swara* generally form the mainstay of its programme while pieces take comparatively a secondary place. The exigencies of a long-drawn-out marriage procession or temple festival may be one of the reasons for a piper to spin out *ragas* for hours together. There is also a standing controversy as to the influence of Nadhaswaram on other kinds of music, instrumental and vocal. Some there are who admire catches of its style in a vocalist and some who deplore it. Perhaps both are true, from their respective points of view.

In instrumental music it is the most popular, best preserved and greatly encouraged and hence pipers of great eminence have not been few in the land. From Kornad Natesan and Semmanar Koil Ramaswamy to Ponnuswami Pillai of Madura in the recent past you have had a galaxy of remarkable pipers renowned for their great art. Ponnuswamy Pillai was perhaps the last of the veterans and after him you may not find now master-minds of that type. Still among the living musicians of the present day, the music world is familiar with about half a dozen pipers noted for their good art and popularity. Two leading luminaries among them command perhaps the

widest popularity and Veeruswamy Pillai of Thiruvadaimaruthur is one of them.

Few there are who have not heard him and fewer still who after hearing him once return without a longing to attempt catches of his style. Musicians of good voice, profound learning, wonderful practice and riotous imagination there are and you admire them for all these. But it is not these that give out a style. With or without much of these, you may find a musician capturing your heart by his unmistakable individuality and by that something which transcends all these. The plan or manner of presenting or rendering what the musician knows with the sure stamp of his individuality is no doubt one of the chief elements of a style. A stylist is born and rarely made, and Mr. Veeruswamy Pillai is a born stylist of no mean order. In a way, from the point of view of a distinct and catchy style and its popularity, it may be said that what Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar is in the field of vocal music, that Veeruswamy is in the field of Nadhaswaram. But Pillai has other qualities as well to embellish his music.

The very sound that he produces through his pipe is all his own and inimitable. It enslaves your ears and heart from the outset. It is soft and mellow for a Nadhaswaram, exquisitely melodious and at times languishingly sweet. The average pipe, on account of its voluminous and resounding tone, will appear to pierce through your ear-drums when played in a hall or close by. But Veeruswamy's instrument can be heard in a hall and at close quarters without any disagreeable sensation. With him there is no such thing as a preliminary stage of dull beginning before warming up to the effective musical atmosphere or *melakattu* as it is called. The very first onset of his

sweet melodies is like the cool freshets of a limpid mountain stream and it agreeably swells into a full flood of exquisite music. In creating this musical atmosphere of the gripping type from the very outset he is said to remind you of the late Thirumarugal Natesan.

On this warp of entrancing melody, he weaves the woof of sweet classical music with sure mastery and embroiders it with rich and varied imagery, giving the whole the finish of a highly refined and polished style, with unfailing elegance and grace. Without moving in any hackneyed or fixed grooves, he is as rich in *Manodharma* as he is exquisite in grace and polish. His ragas are invariably based on well laid plans: and in fact they are arrestingly attractive plans. His musical phrases and imagery are poured out with apparently effortless ease. They are not only varied but also beautifully arranged with desirable symmetry, balance and proportion. Further they are highly embellished by a remarkable and abundant play of *anuswaras* and that is no ordinary feature of his style. It is not any amount of mere *swara-gnana* that can help a musician to bring out the real *swarupa* of a raga and Veeruswami's intuition in touching upon the proper "jeeva" of a raga and in bringing out its full shape are remarkable. With gushing melody and cadence, with alluring touch and elusive grace, his ragas are perfect portraits in luxuriant colours, highly emotional in effect.

He is at his best in his ragas and he handles a wide variety of them. It is difficult to choose from among his stock. His BHAIRAVI, KAMBOJI and KERRAVANI among the *ghana* ragas and his KETHARAGOWLA, MOHANA and KAPI among the smaller ones may deserve some special mention. *Apurva* ragas too he renders with facile ease.

SHANMUGAPRIYA, HAMSANANDI and the like are rendered by him with as much ease and grace as some of the more common ragas.

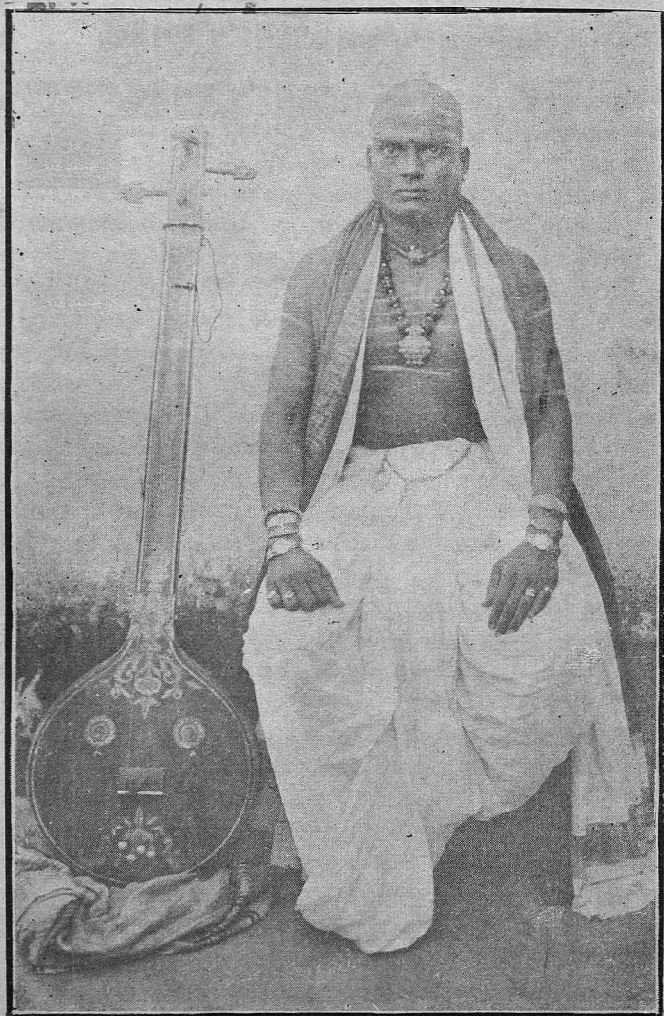
In Nadhaswaram music, the *laya* aspect is highly developed and it is there that many varieties of tala, not ordinarily attempted in other musical concerts, are found displayed. Add to this the vociferous sound of the drum called the *Thavil*, and the tendency to overdo the *laya* aspect and to indulge in acrobatics of the boring mechanical variety becomes great. But Veeruswamy is happily free from it. His plan and style would not permit it either. His *manodharma* is of that desirable type which while rich in varied imagery is all controlled by melody and grace. You do not find in him the spectacle of a riotous imagination leading to a display of brilliant pyrotechnic not always harmonising in with absolute melody and grace—a characteristic that is not uncommon in some master minds. Even his *Pallavi* is rich and luxurious in *raga bhava*.

Though pipers are said to begin their first lessons in vocal music and to learn a number of kritis and other pieces before they take to the instrument, they do not in the average seem to set much store by them. Exceptions there have been and there are now; but Veeruswamy is not one of them. There is not much of anything noteworthy about his kritis and other pieces and he does not seem to care much for them either. At best they are only pegs to hang his ragas and *nereval* on.

Still in the prime of his life, rather dark in colour, and endowed with attractive and intelligent features Veeruswamy is affable in manners and pleasantly sociable in company. Born and brought up in musical surroundings of his district noted for refinement in the art, he has won his

way up by his mastery over it, and has become a leading luminary in that field. He is alive to the higher conceptions of the art. For all appearances and perhaps on account of his busy professional engagements, he prefers smooth sailing to controversies and discussions of doubtful utility in knotty problems of theory and practice in music. After Ponnuswamy, few pipers seem to take much of active interest in the *lakshana* aspect of music. He adjusts himself well to his environments. Though pipers have got their own programme of performances, Veeruswamy has found able to adjust himself to the programme of an ordinary musical concert beginning with *varna* and ending with miscellaneous pieces, within the limits of three hours. Though by itself it might not be much and might be of doubtful utility elsewhere ordinarily for pipers, it helped to clear off some of the artificial and departmental barriers between Nadhaswaram and other kinds of musical concerts.

There are few rich marriages or temple festivals that do not include Veeruswami's Nadaswaram music. Wherever he goes he creates a flutter among music lovers and musicians and the trace of his presence in a place will indelibly be marked by most of the minor fry among the pipers attempting to reproduce catches of his style long after he has left the place.



Vedanta Bhagavatar

VEDANTA BHAGAVATAR

Music lover! if you have got an open mind free from prejudices, parochial patriotism and strong likes and dislikes and if you are interested in finding out styles in vocal music, you cannot but stumble upon at least three of them. One you can find out easily as that of Ramanuja Iyengar with its smooth and fixed grooves, simple finish and grace and outward polish. It is apparently the most catchy and popular, particularly among the younger generation in urban areas like the City of Madras. Another is that of the late of Konerirajapuram Vaidyanatha Iyer with its slow movements and highly subtle conceptions and imagery. It does not appear to have many votaries of distinction, though catches of the same may be found here and there, as in Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer. The third is that of Vedanta Bhagavatar of Kallidaikurichi, noted for its power, grandeur and majesty and having its grip over the music loving public south of the Cauvery and in the West Coast. The first type is a clear, limpid mountain stream, the second is a slow moving flood wending its zigzag and ramifying course through sylvan wilds; and the third is a spectacular cascade or waterfall of power, grandeur and majesty. Even as a waterfall shines in varied hues and shapes according to the play of the sun's rays on its spray, the Vedantam style is subject to extraordinarily changing moods and *manodharma*. Curiously enough—it may be said at the outset—that the chief characteristics of this style are to be found at the present day more in his younger brother Ramalingam and some of his admirers among amateurs and professionals than in the author himself.

If ever a genius in music was born and had his talents developed in the midst of great master-minds and best surroundings, if that genius had contributed a distinct style to music and had a career of rare brilliance and if the very talents and easy success brought into him a self-centred egotism that disdained the whole world and virtually shut him up in a citadel of parochial tastes leading to perverse eccentricities and if on account of all these, he drew towards him mixed feelings of respect, admiration, fear and prejudice, it is Vedanta Bhagavatar of Kallidaikurichi. Over 54 years in age, with a broad face, sparkling eyes and a small chip of hair on his head, the Bhagavatar may be found eternally chewing his pan and returning your greetings with a condescending nod of his head and at times with a self-complacent smile.

Born at Kallidaikurichi, on the 15th February 1879, with the gift of a glorious voice and rare musical talents, he spent his formative early boyhood at Thiruvaduthurai, imbibing the music of the great masters, who came to give their performances at the Mutt, where his father Muthu Sastri was, by family tradition, the official Sanskrit Pandit and tutor to its head. After some early training under Ramaswamy Bhagavatar of Merattur, he came for a short time under the influence of Subbier of Vasudevanallur in Tinnevely District who was noted for his skill in *Vakra* and *Vishama* manipulation in *Swara* and *tala* and who was agreeably surprised and who felt proud to find his pupil outdoing him in his art within a few months of his contact with him. Lured again to the musical centres of the Tanjore District, he served for a time as accompanying chorist to the late Panchapakesa Sastri of Kumbakonam in his Kalakshepam performances. Learning the technique of that art as well, he returned to his native

village at the age of twenty-one and settled down as a Kalakshepam artist. After ten or twelve years of no mean success in that line, wherein he was noted both for his art and his eccentricities, he took to the regular concert platform for which his gifts and talents eminently fitted him ; and since then he has had a career of rare brilliance as a vocalist holding unquestioned sway over the music world of the Southern districts.

In his early days of sojourn in 'Chola Desa,' he had the unique fortune of close friendship with senior veterans like Krishna Bhagavatar, Thirukodikaval Krishna Iyer and Sarabha Sastri and with fellow students like Tirumarugal Natesan of Nadhaswaram renown. That friendship was full of interesting episodes of endearing mutual affection, regard and help. His voice then was so superb that the kind and generous Sarabha Sastri used to take him at times to sing along with his flute in many a performance and not infrequently, the two delighted in working out interesting problems in music together. He appears to have had the influence of Manpudia Pillai too in the development of his talents. With his powerful voice, *swaragnana* and grip over *tala*, his then existing temperament to fight—combined with the encouragement of his good friends—led him to become a stormy petrel and prominent hero in the musical contests of those days, winning his own and others' battles.

For a few years during his early career as a *Bhagavatar* and concert musician, he had the close association of Dakshinamoorthi Pillai of Pudukottah as well, who lived with him in his village and followed him as one of his invariable set of accompanists.

The essence of the Vedantam style is in the power of the voice behind it and the richness of imagination colour-

ing it. You are struck at the very outset by the magnificent volume of his voice. It would drown the loudest of accompaniments, filling your ears with the flood of its full and rich *nada* and you won't feel the existence of anything else beside it for the time being. With this great volume it has a ringing resonance and wide range. It is at its best in broad sweeping curves; and the *tara stayi* is its forte. The mechanical feat of a musician taking his voice to the higher *Panchama* is admired and cheered as a rare one by the average music hall audiences. It is but a common and frequent phenomenon in Vedantam, who not only takes it to that pinnacle but also stays there for an appreciable time and displays wonderful pyrotechnic therefrom. By its very nature it cannot be of the *ravvai* variety and may not display much of quick *birka*. But it delights in beautiful *Vorikh*. Though it is full of *gamakas*, the temperament underlying the style precludes it from developing thick and thin shades or soft candences and shuns languishing elegance and tenderness as weak and effeminate.

Broad plans with profundity and depth of conception and play of ever varying imagery, leisurely and impressive handling of ragas and pieces without the hurry of the present day average music, sweeping and majestic curves, revelling in *Sanchara* in the *tara stayi*, jeevaful *Karvai* in strategic *swarasthanas*, exploitation of the fullest possibilities of the sounds in the relevant swaras and *anuswaras*, a characteristic manipulation of an avalanche of well arranged musical phrases in *madyamakala* with not a little of *Vakra Sancharas*, due attention to *raga bhava* in all that is sung, sure and visible mastery over *swaragnana* and *tala* and bold and extempore but not always pleasing or melodious experiments, antics and acrobatics of an un-

conventionally riotous fancy—these in short are some of the notable characteristics of the Vedantam Style.

That style is at its best in ragas. It cannot think of raga singing in small terms. On the broadest of plans it works out magnificent conceptions and bold imagery, often not conforming to average and conventional notions of the art. With a power and deftness of execution, the imagination runs riot and the musician loses himself thoroughly in his art and sings out his heart. As such it grips the audience effectively and sways them to a high pitch of emotion. The artless ease that characterises an elegant style is absent and the very uncontrollable nature of the *manodharma* prevents it from having any fixed or smooth set grooves or ready made and outward polish.

Vedantam and his brother handle a large number of ragas and their treatment of them, whether they are big or small, ordinary or *apurva* is masterly. *Mekharanjani* or *Malayamarutham*, *Karaharapriya* or *Shanmukapriya*, *Vijayavasantham* or *Balahamsa*, comes out from them as facilely as *Kalyani* or *Kambhoji*, *Begada* or *Suddha Saveri*, *Dhanyasi* or *Devagandhari*, *Ketharagowla* or *Chakravaka*. They can sing a raga elaborately for a considerable time without unnecessary repetition of musical phrases and without cloying your appetite.

If you want to enjoy now a Carnatic raga of boundless fancy, passionately rendered with contagious emotion, you must hear it in the younger brother Ramalingam. Though not as rich as his brother in his natural gift of voice, he has by his wonderful practice harnessed a rather mediocre voice of his to pour out in torrents live ragas of rare brilliance—with the basic

features of his brother's style combined with an amazingly cultivated *birka* and tremulo of his own. But he too is lacking in some of the softer graces and the tremulo is at times overdone.

In the matter of compositions Vedantam cannot be said to have any considerable stock. It is doubtful whether he handles more than a limited number of kritis of Tyagaraja, Patnam Subramania Iyer, Garpapurivaru, Gopalakrishna Bharati and one or two others. (The younger brother Ramalingam however appears to be free from this apparent shortcoming). But the few pieces that Vedantam handles are abundantly characteristic of his style. They appear fresh, majestic and capable of gripping your mind even at the hundredth repetition. There is no Vedantam without his "Karubaru cheya varu" in MUKHARI, "tsakkani raja margamu" in KARAHARAPRIYA and "tulasilwa" in KETHARAGOWLA. The first mentioned one appears to be all his own in its rendering and practically no other vocalist seems to attempt it. The piece "Nagumomu ganale" also takes a majestic ring in him. The admiring tyranny of his audiences would not allow him to miss these pieces in his performances even if he would. In the matter of development of *Sangathis* in their pieces, the brothers belong to that school, which holds, that no kriti is exhaustive of its *raga bhava* and that so long as *Sangathis* are not inconsistent with the *bhava* of the piece, there is nothing in the way of adding to the regulation ones according to the *manodharma* of the musician. But all the same it is sometimes carried to excess by them and hence not always appreciable. With their natural leaning towards *Vilambakala*, and being at their best in it they can be found often to sing untiringly a number of

long pieces in succession and as such its effect on untried and unfamiliar audiences may not always be as vivacious as that of a happy mixture of pieces of different *kalas*.

In the matter of *Swaragnana* and *tala* the Bhagavatar is an acknowledged master and though they are ordinarily controlled by *raga bhava* he is not free at times from the temptation for antics and acrobatics. The fertile imagination displays itself in his *Swaraprasthara* and *Pallavi* as well, revelling not infrequently in *vakra* and *Vishama prayogas*. Masterly and admirable they are in general, though they may suffer a bit at times from the temperamental want of softness. His mastery over *swaragnana* has instilled into him a fondness for that rare and difficult art of *Sruthi bedha* which was also cultivated by the late Govindaswami Pillai and Ponnuswami Pillay. While singing one raga—say SANKARABHARANA—you take the *madyama* as the base and by manipulating the other constituent swaras produce a KALYANI; or take the *gandhara* as the base and produce a THODI and come back again to SANKARABHARANA, all in perfect tune. Amazingly wonderful as it is, its desirability does not seem to be above dispute among certain experts. Vedantam used to make bold experiments with it on the platform. Few could understand, or follow it and in the ears of the uninitiated it would look as a mixture of ragas—a weakness of which he could never be accused.

Among the living vocalists, he is perhaps one of the very few who have been uniformly keeping down the accompaniments in their proper places. He would ever be the assertive ruler of the platform requiring their subordinate co-operation. If they try to handicap him once, he would throw across them a hundred hurdles; if they dare to bluff him they are sure to be

bluffed and he is a past master in that art. In certain moods he could be seen to sing on continuously so as to ignore practically the existence of accompanists. He too was one of those whose times witnessed the rise of the accompanying giants and who necessarily equipped themselves with special skill in the laya aspect of musical technique though without losing sight of other essentials of good art or allowing it to be too obtrusive—except of course when provoked. That he was an adept in ‘*Vyavaharas*’ (as they are called in musical slang to indicate uncommon feats of skill in swara, tala etc.) is but too well known among musicians, and he commands the respect of all accompanists towards him, requiring more than the usual alertness on their part in his performances. And this combined with his eccentricities and a notion that he carries always with him a fighting tendency—has been responsible for some prejudice against him. In the company of those who do understand him and his style and follow him, his performance would be plain sailing and a treat indeed: He is easily provoked; and there have been occasions when he used to come out at his best by being stirred up from moods of sagging enthusiasm by slight but necessary pin pricks by the well meaning ones among his accompanists and listeners. With his rolling eyes and antic gestures of his hands on occasions, his platform manners may not always be uniform or elegant. In the younger of the two brothers, the excessive gesturing and wriggling of the body are as uncontrollable as the *manodharma*. But in the flood of their toneful music all these are overlooked by their audiences.

Vedantam has tried his hands also at original compositions of his own. Most of them are in praise of

God Subramania whose devotee he is and the rest are interesting and popular national songs. He is now engaged in bringing out a few original works of practical value as "*Ragasudhakara*", "*Pallavi Parijatha*" and "*Swara kalpalatha*" dealing with proper methods of working out *Ragas*, *Pallavis* and *Swara-prasthara*, respectively. As a *lakshana* vidwan of outstanding merit he is perhaps best fitted to do these ; and it is hoped, that when these come out finally, they will prove to be of much practical use to the music world.

As a professional, he is known for his independence of character sometimes unbending to the extreme. He can never play to the gallery nor has he ever cared to adjust himself to the varying tastes of different audiences. He has not been known to seek the smile or favour of a prince or patriotic or the boss of a music Sabha. He makes no distinction between friends and strangers on the business side. He has none of the engaging humility, affable manners and easy conversation that endear to you some of the present day musicians. He seldom attends others' performances. A sense of the high dignity of his profession and supreme worth of his own art as belonging to a great past, combined with a never failing memory of his association with the veterans of his early age colour his whole nature. Being conscious of the higher ideals in the art, he is constantly working at them, though you may not always be sure of his patience or earnestness to give out the benefits of his thoughts and labours to the public in an easy, cogent and appreciable manner. Eccentricities born of a kind of excessive intellectualism appear to beset many a master mind ; and in Vedantam, these combined with a comparative lack of those corrective and refining influences of his early surroundings and of varying tastes

and regions appear to some extent to have told upon his latter day tastes and style.

With all his faults Vedantam is a master mind of mixed qualities and great originality and his art at its best is a remnant of a glorious past in classical music—notwithstanding its apparent want of as wide a popularity in some parts of the presidency as in the South. After all the popularity of a style depends not merely on its intrinsic merits but also upon the public getting familiar with it by frequent hearing and fair understanding of the same. Once you have heard his music you could not forget it and he who has not heard him must be the poorer for it.



Alagunambia Pillai

Courtesy—Indian Express

ALAGUNAMBIA PILLAI

The fact that tala accompaniments and their influence on our musical concerts have been over-growing their limits for some time past tending to the comparative decline of good music need not lead one to the conclusion that we have had no Mridangam players who formed enjoyable exceptions to the rule and who held up the art of accompanying as it ought to be. In the hands of Narayanaswamiappa and Thukkaram in the past, it attained a unique development and importance on account of their masterly and exquisite handling of it. Till three or four years back, if you had asked an average music lover as to his preference among mridangam players, he would have mentioned only one name as the most lovable and that is Alagunambia Pillai of Kumbakonam. Without exaggeration, it may be said, that in his hands, the sound possibilities of that unique tala instrument were fully brought out. What he touched was sweet and what he produced was delightful. The instrument gloried in him and he in it. Born at Sreerangam, and brought up at Kumbakonam, he belonged to a musical family in which his grandfather Swaminatha Pillai was a noted musician. One Ponniah Pillai of Mridangam fame, an ancestor of his, was the recipient of honours from the Mysore Princes and his younger brother Narayanaswami Pillai was Palace Vidwan in Pudukkottah.

From his early age Alagunambi had the atmosphere of the Nautch around him, and his early training lay in the direction of accompanying in nautch parties. He appears to have played Mridangam in the theatrical shows of the famous Kalyanarama Iyer and Koneri Rao of the early Tamil stage. Till 18, he was almost confined to

nautch parties. Playing for nautch has no ordinary influence on the art of accompanying. In the first place it must be strictly subordinate to and be in perfect tune and spirit with the songs therein. The *jathis* are to a large extent controlled by the dancer and the accompanying chorists ; and dance *jathis* are mostly measured and graceful. Further, he seems to have been engaged subsequently for kalakshepam performances by artists like Narasimha Bhagavatar, Krishna Bhagavatar, Natesa Dikshitar and Panchapakesa Bhagavatar. His skill in the art, his light touch and sweet sounds could not but single out the man and draw him into the field of concert music as well, and he appears to have come into it between 22 and 25 years of his age. In those days he had the great examples of Narayanaswamiappa and Thukkaram to follow and he benefitted not a little by closely studying their art though from a distance. He is now aged about 61. Dark in complexion and short of stature, he has a well built constitution though his health of late has suffered a little.

He has been one of the most popular figures of the concert platform for more than a generation and so long as he was actively in the field his play was almost the last word in the art of accompanying on Mrindangam. There was rarely a 'major' or paying performance without him and scarcely a musician who did not feel delighted and flattered by having him for accompaniment. In short, he was almost an ideal accompanist in the true sense of the word. He tried his utmost to follow his primary. He was temperamentally incapable of putting any hurdles or difficulties in the way of his principal musician. He never carried anything to excess ; and his '*tani-avarthas*' or solo displays were enjoyable pieces of art in themselves. The instrument, perhaps, the only one among the tala variety

that has natural melody and grace in its sounds was found to be more graceful in his hands. On the platform, he was unobtrusive and unassuming, doing his work modestly and faithfully. It made no difference to him even if he found himself among fighting gladiators of the concert ring. Even in 'circus' performances which invariably included him, his play used to be marked out for its comparative freedom from the excesses of other tala accompaniments. Whether it was a *nadai bedha*, or *nereval* or even a *ta-thi-ginathom*, his play was soft and graceful and had none of the bizaare effect of the loud thumping variety. His manipulation of the instrument was such as it could not but embellish the music of the concert.

It might be that according to some *tala* extremists the art of following an intricate *pallavi* and negotiating with the labyrinthian *sancharas* and pyrotechnique of excessively intellectual super experts and arriving at an uncanny starting point with mathematical precision was occasionally not altogether an easy task and labour for him. For the matter of that, it has not been and it is not easy for anybody ; and all difficult things are not necessarily good art. He had never any faith in the jaw breaking and ear splitting acrobatics of the purely intellectual and mechanical type of artists and he never attempted any. His limitations, if any, were, perhaps a blessing from the point of view of good and true art. With your ears filled with the sweet melody of the sounds of his instrument and the grace of their manipulation, nothing else would be cognisant to you. He could never fight and he never bluffed. He was always natural in what he did. Though he has no pre-possessing personality, his figure always suggests a simple, innocent and kind man and his gentle nature and unassuming manners endear him to all. Even

at his advanced age, and failing strength, his performance at the music conference in 1931 in combination with Palladam Sanjeeva Rao and Venkataswami Naidu both of whom were noted for the sweetness of their melodious music on their flute and violin respectively was appreciable and that combination drew a record crowd at the music hall. If a tala instrument was only intended to supply and bring into prominence the rhythm form in music, if its purpose was best served by keeping itself generally unobtrusive and if it was noticable only in its embellishing the concert by adding to its melody and richness of harmonious rhythmic display, it was Mridangam in the hands of Alagunambia Pillai.

NOTABLE ARTISTS IN BHARATA NATYA

In a series of pen portraits of platform musicians, one needs no apology to turn his attention to that least encouraged but all the same the most important and glorious art of *Bharata Natya*. By this time even purists and prudes would have been convinced of the intrinsic beauty of the art, however much it may suffer by the medium by which it is represented. Of the benefits of the present day renaissance that is galvanising South Indian fine arts, the Dance has not as yet had its full share. For one thing, with the passing away of discerning patronage from knowing princes and patricians to the many-headed multitude, it is but natural that this art with all its over developed technique could not easily be understood or followed and much less be encouraged. Further, social reform ideas with not a little confusion of purposes and methods had contributed to lessen the interest in it. The recent controversy over the art (in December 1932) must have done much to clear the issues and made the art loving public understand its real nature and its present precarious position and the duty of one and all to rejuvenate it.

Once you have some initiation into the art, you cannot but be struck by its beauty and the human ingenuity displayed therein. In South Indian Dance, meaningful gesturing or "abhinaya" is the predominant aspect set in a background of artistic poses and elaborate rhythmic variations called "adavu jathis." It has got a set and traditional technique revelling in ramifyingly detailed *abinaya* with variegated and delicate shades of

expression and rhythmic elaborations of great intricacy. It is somewhat different from the 'interpretative' dances of the modern day artists of the North with their simpler poses and rhythmic movements and perhaps greater variety of themes. The programme of a nautch ordinarily consists of what are called "Alarippu," "Jathiswara," "Sabdha," "Pada-Varna," "Pada," "Javali," "Thillana", miscellaneous pieces and slokas and verses. Roughly, the first two consist of mere rhythmic poses and movements (*nritta*). The 3rd has some abhinaya or bhava (*Nritya*) though with rhythm predominating; while the *Pada Varna* is the biggest item having full and detailed abhinaya and rhythmic elaborations of many varieties. The rest of the items except the *Thillana* and some of the miscellaneous pieces have more of abhinaya than rhythmic elaboration while the verse has only abhinaya without tala. The *Padas* (noted for their rich raga bhava, are coveted items in a dance programme. In a sense, the Varna may be said to represent and emphasise the scholarly aspect and the Pada the lyrical phase of the art. Most of the songs are erotic by nature. But the convention appears to be that they ultimately represent the yearning and love of "Jeevathma" or human soul for "Paramathma" the supreme being in the Nayaki-Nayaka bhava. The "Ashtapadis" of Jayadeva, the padas of Kshetriya and 'Krishna Karnamrita' slokas are some of the noteworthy compositions included in its programme.

Bharata Natya having been one of the chief features in the festivities of a marriage or temple, it had been highly developed in the past throughout the presidency and many a famous name appears to have adorned and enriched it. Tiruvalur Gnanam, Tanjore Kamalamba, Pudukottah Ammalu, Kamakshamma of Tanjore (grand-

mother of Veena Dhanam) Salem Meenakshi, the Kunjaram sisters, Madathi daughter and Nallanayakam, Ammuthayi and Rukmani of Tinnevely and last but not least Jagadamba,—the memories of whose performances are still fresh in all true lovers of that art—are but a few names in the rich galaxy of artists of the golden age of the past. Though on account of the general decline in public encouragement as well as in the standard of the art itself you may not expect now great names of the types mentioned above, you may still come across a few artists of some outstanding ability who are keeping up the tradition ; and among them Gouri of Mylapore, Muthurathnamba (of Nallanayakam family) of Tinnevely, the Kalyani daughters of Tanjore and Balasaraswathi of Madras may be mentioned.

GOURI

The senior most among the four, Gouri is the daughter of Doraikkannamma and a great grand-daughter of Mylapore Dhanam who was a noted songstress. Her mother had learnt the art under Krishna Nattuvan of Tanjore. She had her training under Nalluru Munuswamy Nattuvanar and developed her *abhinaya* under the teaching of her own mother. Short of stature and fair of complexion, she has chiselled and expressive features of an attractive type and a good voice. She is further one of the very few who sing while showing *abhinaya*. She has a considerable variety of compositions and handles a number of padas in particular. Her gesturing is graceful and she observes a desirable proportion in the items of her dance. With good learning and long experience in the art she is also endowed with some general culture, and she displays

her art with good mastery, skill, restraint and refinement. She has appreciable originality and manodharma and she is a good teacher in the art as well. Clever and masterly as she is in her rhythmic displays she keeps them within desirable and enjoyable limits.

MUTHURATNAMBA

Muthuratnamba of Tinnevely is the last among four successive generations of illustrious artists of the Nallanayakam family noted for its rich traditions in the art. Her mother Rukmani was herself a reputed danseuse of great originality. Subbaraya Nattuvanar, Samasthana Vidwan of Ettiyapuram was then the chief tutor to the family which had the benefit of the influence of Sabhapathi Nattuvanar of Chidambaram also to some extent. The present artist learnt her art mostly from her mother. In addition to her family heredity and able training she is also fortunate in having a rare type of chorist in Subramaniam, the son of Sabhapathi, to accompany her. Much of the success and embellishment of a dance depend upon the music of the accompanying chorist and Subramaniam is perhaps one of the few living chorists whose music is of a high order. If you want to enjoy music of a rich and powerful voice and to know how its richness in raga bhava aids and embellishes the bhava or abhinaya of the danseuse and if you want to listen to the sahitya even in Sanskrit verses clearly and impressively rendered, you must hear Subramaniam. Add to this background the natural gifts of the lady artist herself, who is still in the prime of life, medium of stature and build, fair in



Kalyani Daughters
(Rajalakshmi and Jeevaratnam)

Courtesy—Rao Saheb P. Ramachandra Chetty

complexion and endowed with intelligent, and mobile features. Her gesturing is arrestingly impressive and her facial expressions highly suggestive. With the fire of her naturally rich *manodharma* constantly fanned into flame by the equally rich fancy of her accompanying chorist, she puts in a vigour of execution and contagious emotion in her art. In this field as in music too much of outward and artificial polish have a tendency to keep the artist in fixed and mechanical grooves, which may please an audience for the time being superficially. In those who render their art with power, vigour, heart-felt emotion, and "*Swanubhuti*" or self-enjoyment combined with varying *manodharma*, it carries an audience off their feet in contagious enthusiasm and leaves a lasting impression. Muthuratnambal's art is somewhat of the latter type in its revelry in deeper shades of emotion. Still capable of much foot work in *adavujathis* as she is, she too keeps it to a necessary minimum and perhaps in the flood of her impressive abhinaya her audiences do not feel the want of any more.

THE KALYANI DAUGHTERS *

A combination of appreciable abhinaya and considerable foot work in *adavujathis* mark the art of the Kalyani daughters of Thiruvallaputhur. The daughters of a mother who was herself a noted

* Since writing the above article originally in the 'Indian Express' the tragic news of the untimely death of Miss Jeeyaratnam the younger of the two Kalyani daughters by smallpox in June '33 came to be known. It is a great pity that the cruel hand of death should have snatched away such a talented artist while still in the bloom of youth and with a great future and the art of dancing is the poorer for her loss.

artist, they had their training under Meenakshisundram of Pandanallur who has a hoary family tradition for greatness in this art and is by himself a man of great talents. They dance together and their performance is ordinarily called a double dance. Just as a chorus in Carnatic music has got its merits and demerits so has the Double Dance. The simultaneous rendering of *abhinaya* and *adavujathis* by two persons together adds novelty and vivacity to the art though small but inevitable differences in personal characteristics may sometimes lead to a distraction of comparisons and contrasts. The two artists Rajalakshmi and Jeevaratnam are still in their youth and are nimble of feet; and the *abhinaya* is noteworthy particularly in the younger one. Of slender frame and dark brown complexion her lithe, graceful figure with ever smiling face, large eyes and expressive features mark out conspicuously the younger sister, Jeevaratnam; and her art arrests the attention of the audience from the outset. The stock of the two sisters may not be considerable or varied; but they try to be elaborate in what they know, especially in their *pada varna*. They invariably display much of variegated *adavujathis* in scintillating cascades and they are vivacious in effect, though at times they are carried to excess.

BALASARASWATHI

Balasaraswathi the grand-daughter of Veena Dhanam, is yet another with appreciable talents in the art. Though not endowed with a prepossessing figure necessary for the art, she is at present the youngest among notable artists. She has the advantage of a great and reputed family tradition in music and dance and also a mother in Jayammal

(daughter of Veena Dhanam) whose music is of a charmingly sweet type and who accompanies her as a chorist in certain portions of her programme. She has been trained chiefly by Kandappan an able Nattuvanar and also by Chinniah Naidu an aged specialist in *abhinaya*. The family is the repository of a large number of padas in Tamil and Telugu and the young artist having learnt to some extent *abhinaya* for them under Gouri of Mylapore displays good art in them. The desirable Tambura for *sruti* forms part of her accompaniments and the vociferous clarionet is conspicuous by its absence in her performance, though its substitute the flute is yet to become more appreciable than now. She is a rising artist and with greater power of endurance and experience and better control over rhythm than what she has now she is likely to have a bright future.

Balasaraswathi's handling of a number of padas in Tamil has added not a little to her present popularity and as such it is not without significance. The popularity and appreciation of a song or dance depend also very much upon the language of the sahitya understandable by most of the audience. If masterpieces of concert music or dance are to become more popular and better appreciated than songs of the theatre and Kalakshepam, among the general public, so far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, more and more of Tamil compositions of a high class type will have to be brought out in Tamil.

Before the year of grace 1933 artists including Balasaraswathi were dancing and in the coming years too many more are likely to come up. But if withal she shot up this year into a unique popularity it is perhaps not wholly unconnected with a bit of interesting public psychology in addition to her talents. She happened to be the first artist, at Madras, with youth, talents and other advan-

tages, to catch the eyes of the public in general after they were opened to the importance and beauty of a glorious art, and to ride on the tidal surge of popular enthusiasm for it, created chiefly by the controversy of an exciting nature in the public press over it and its culmination in the music conference resolutions, among other factors.

When all is said, the art requires not only to be rejuvenated but also to be overhauled a little if it should have any real appeal in these days. As it is, it is mostly confined to erotic songs. Some compositions like 'Okkasariki' will have to be eschewed. In addition to existing compositions of the desirable type new compositions of good tastes and quality may have to be brought out in "rasas" other than "sringara" as well. Accompaniments have much to be improved. If possible the vociferous clarinet will have to be substituted by the flute or other more agreeable and indigenous instruments. The noise of the jalar in the hands of the nattuvans will have to be controlled and reduced considerably so as to allow the beautiful sound of the ankle bells heard much better than is ordinarily the case. The traditional nautch dress is happily well suited to the nature of the dance though in many cases the artists, do not seem to understand or pay due attention to its value in the matter of setting off the contour of the body to great advantage without at the same time any indecency (in the manner of tying the ordinary nautch saree of light muslin and glistening lace). The over developed technique of the art admirable as it is in much of the details of abhinaya and adavujathis has to be kept within limits and desirable proportions so as not to obscure or interfere with the natural grace of movements and poses. There is still something of a low atmosphere in a nautch performance in marriage and other private func-

tions about which social reformers rightly complain. That is the very reason why the art should be taken out of private parties and given a respectable platform amidst respectable audiences when alone it can be shorn of its undesirable features. Above all, persons belonging to respectable classes must boldly take to it as they do it in the North.

Though the actual dancer on the platform is a lady, the initial training is given generally by males called Nattuvanars and the learned professors in the art also have mostly belonged to the male sex. Men like the late Natesa Iyer of Merattur had not only been professors in the art but actual exponents of the same in their own persons appearing naturally as males or donning feminine robes. There is a living professor in Bharatam Narayanaswami Iyer of Nallur, now at Kumbakonam. The talents of such men should not be allowed to grow rusty in the exigencies of modern life or for want of proper encouragement and opportunities. It may be worth while to harness the new enthusiasm for the dance to find out all available talents among young and grown up artists, Nattuvanars and learned professors and give them due encouragement. In art, in addition to youth, experience also counts.

The Nautch or 'Sadir' of the South is only one of the many species of Bharata Natya. Being the best of them it is called ordinarily by the generic name itself to differentiate it from others. Incidentally most of the rhythmic poses and movements have got their value as ideal physical exercises as well. If music itself is to have its proper development, it cannot neglect *Bharatanatya*—its very source and repository of all *bhava*—and we may hope that the day will not be far off when the art of Dancing would be rejuvenated to its pristine glory.

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ADDENDA ET CORRIGENDA

Page 34, para 2 : The violin appears to have been introduced into South India more than a hundred years ago and it has had from 'time to time many votaries of distinction such as Vadivelu, Ponnuswamy Pillai, Subbaraya Iyer, Rangacharlu, Mahadeva Iyer of Malabar, Siyali Narayanaswami Pillai, Pudukkottah Narayanaswami Iyer and others besides the names mentioned in that para.

- „ 19 „ 1, last line : for 'than a popular vocalist' *read* 'than as a popular vocalist'
- „ 22 „ 2, line 5 from bottom : for 'SAVARI' *read* 'SAVERI'
- „ 39 „ 3, line 6 : for 'various varieties', *read* 'more than one method'
- „ 63 „ 2, last line : for 'rare ragas' *read* 'rare talas'
- „ 67 „ 2, line 4 : for 'to makes' *read* 'to make'
- „ 68 „ 1, line 12 : in 'victory over his baffling technique,' for the word 'over' *read* 'of'
- „ 76 „ 1, line 17 : for 'barriers between' *read* 'notions about'
- „ 90 line 10, for 'unobstrusive' *read* 'unobtrusive'
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