

From the Editor's Desk

|| Srih ||



As we await the much anticipated Thyagaraja Festival after Margazhi season, it seemed only apt to pen paeans of the saint in Shri T R Parthasarathy's words. I wanted to share an excerpt from an article of Shri T R Parthasarathy- 'The poetry of Tyagaraja' which I have tried to condense to fit to the reader's appetite in the following paragraphs.

(This article is penned by Aparajetha Mohan an adult student of Samskrtasangitam School of Music, an ardent rasika and writer.)

Shri. Tyagaraja is a remarkable figure in music, hailed as an innovator! His works, seen as "poems set to music," showcase his poetic brilliance and charm. The artistry in his kritis is unmatched in South Indian music! This fusion of sahitya and melody highlights his extraordinary talent and emotional depth, cementing his legacy in Indian classical music!

Tyagaraja was, first and foremost, a musical composer and a creator of new expressions and forms in music, the fact that he was a competent poet and a master of felicitous expression has added great charm to his compositions and made them virtually "poems set to music". Tyagaraja's kritis are rightly renowned for their poetic excellence, sublimity of thought and unsurpassed yati and prasa (caesura and alliteration) beauties not found in the compositions of any other South Indian composer.

The perfect integration of the sahitya with the music of his pieces was accomplished because of his inherent poetic faculty and impassioned feeling expressed in imaginative verse. And yet this was not so at least until the mid 1940s when songs in praise of Tyagaraja too were heard in Thiruvayyaru. Thus we know that till his passing in 1919, Ramanathapuram Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar invariably sang Sadguru Swamiki Sari, his composition in raga Ritigaula in praise of Tyagaraja, at the Aradhana. Later, his disciple Bangalore Nagarathnamma made it a point to sing the same song, when the ritual waving of camphor was done. She also recited an ashtottara (a set of 108 names) on Tyagaraja, that she composed.

The songs of Tyagaraja are unrivalled for their sweetness, musical beauty and their simple language. Moreover, the sentiments of the songs, philosophical and ethical, and the profundity of his meditation have endowed his kritis with such rare merit that many Telugu scholars read them for the sheer delight of reciting them without any concern for their complicated tunes or intricate talas. Tyagaraja revels equally in gorgeous descriptions of heaven and the celestial beauty of the Lord who resides there as in his pen picture of the village Tiruvaiyaru (of his time) and the river Kaveri which flows nearby.

Doraleuna in Bilahari is one of the pieces in which Tyagaraja excels himself in describing in ornate language the abode of his God with angels and liberated souls enjoying the supreme bliss of His presence. The three charanas of this kriti comprise a rapturous outpouring which will dispel all doubts regarding Tyagaraja's mastery over Telugu idiom and the grandeur of his poetic conception. The first of these charanas which gives a description of Heaven and the Lord who resides therein.

Strangely enough, many of Tyagaraja's longer pieces (except the Pancharatna kritis) are to be found not in praise of Lord Rama, praise of the different Goddesses worshipped by him during his pilgrimage to various shrines. His kritis in praise of Dharmasamvardhani of Tiruvaiyaru, Pravridha Srimati of Lalgudi and Tripurasundari of Tiruvottiyur are outpourings with a truly poetic ring about them. In the kriti Sundari Ninu in Arabhi on Goddess Tripurasundari, he revels in poetic fervour in comparing Her face to the moon, Her majesty to the mountain Meru, Her splendour to the lightning and so on.

A correct assessment of Tyagaraja as a poet can perhaps be made only after a thorough study of his two operas Prahlada Bhakti Vijayam and Nowka Charitram, In these two works we see quite a different facet of the genius of Tyagaraja. It is in these musical plays that he has dispelled all doubts regarding his competence to write verse. A scrutiny of these reveals his easy mastery over all the common metres of Telugu poetry like sisa padyas, kandapadyas, dtvipadas, utpalamala, champakallala and sardulavikrtditan: and also dams, dandakam and gadya. He also exhibits remarkable skill in working up a climax by means of a long padya, ,culminating in a kriti of chiselled beauty in a raga most appropriate for the situation.

The indelible impact that Saint Tyagaraja has on Carnatic music is exemplified by several doyens and other vaggayekaras' works including Walajapet Venkatramana Bhagvathar, Munambu Chavadi Venkata Subbaya, Tammu Narasimha Dasa , Veena Kuppaiyar and so on.

In 19th and 20th century , we have had doyens like that of Ramnad Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar, Mysore Vasudevachary, Mutthaiah Bhagvathar and also M D Ramanathan show their enamor of the Saint.

We have in Tyagaraja a rare combination of a musical genius who could clothe his beautiful creations in art music in equally beautiful language, thus making them a perennial source of inspiration and delight to generations of music lovers.

Sandhya Anand

Director of Samskrasangitam School of Music

NEXT

Student's Special

As we all know, Sri Tyagaraja Swami was a prolific carnatic composer. He travelled to many places in Thanjavur and composed songs praising the deities of the local temples. When he visited Lalgudi, he composed five songs collectively known as the Lalgudi Pancharatna Kritis. Here our little kids do a presentation on Lalgudi Pancharatna kritis.



<https://youtu.be/fx0U3l9DlN0>

Student Scribe

WHAT'S MUSIC IN LIFE

Music needs to be in life because it is Goddess Saraswati and when anything makes a sound then it's music because sound is in music. Also, when we talk, we talk in a tone and tone is also in singing. Music reminds me of peace, cheerful, happy, Goddess Saraswati, learning and sound.



by

Sharada Mahadevan



Music is important to me because it teaches life skills that help me become better day by day. To me, MUSIC is:

- **Serene** - because it helps me calm down when I am stressed.
- **Able** - because it gives me the confidence that I can do anything, with practice and dedication.
- **Natural** - because it is pure, and I can connect myself with nature.
- **Graceful** - because it can evoke my feelings through melody, harmony and rhythm, that words and images cannot.
- **Inclusive** - because it is available to all of us regardless of our differences.
- **Thrilling** - because it is so fun and catchy and makes me very energetic.
- **Artistic** - because it has rhythmic patterns and structure that works beautifully together creating a work of art.
- **Magical** - because it can inspire you and me with wonder and awe!

SANGITAM 🎵

Music is important to me because it teaches life skills that help me become better day by day. To me, MUSIC is:

- **Knowledgeable** - because it teaches me critical-thinking and quick decision-making skills.
- **Appreciative** - because it makes me find beauty in the ups and downs of my daily experiences.
- **Radiating** - because I feel connected with everyone around me spreading positive energy.
- **Nurturing** - because I am being cared for and encouraged by my Guru to keep growing.
- **Abundant** - because it is endless like an ocean that inspires me to leap and learn.
- **Talking** - because it helps me communicate my emotions and prayers to God by singing His praises.
- **Adventurous** - because it makes me explore and try new ideas.
- **Kaleidoscopic** - because it has an infinite range of possibilities for being creative.
- **Addictive** - because it makes me obsessive of wanting to listen more.

KARNATAKA 🎵



WHAT'S MUSIC MEANS TO ME

BY

AASHRAY NEELAMKAVIL

Everyone hears music every day, sometimes even without realizing it. Music can simply be the sound of your breathing, or even typing on a keyboard. It can also mean playing an instrument or singing, which are organized musical notes. For example, songs in Carnatic music have raagas, and those raagas have different feels. Music is a way to express emotion in our lives.

When my dad sings lullabies to me to make me sleep, I have a calm feeling which makes me gradually drift off to sleep. When I hear energetic/rock songs, I feel like jumping up and down. Allegro from the violin book gives me a mixed feeling, the first, second, and fourth lines are restless, but the third line is slow and calm. The tempo or rhythm of the song can also change the feeling of the song.



WHAT'S MUSIC MEANS TO ME

These are a few examples of songs that give me various emotions.

- ❖ Happy-William Tell Overture by Gioachino Rossini-It makes me feel like I'm in a playground swinging on monkey bars.
- ❖ Calm-Morning Mood by Edvard Grieg-It makes me feel like looking at sunrise while the birds are chirping, coming out of their nest to fly and feel free.
- ❖ Sad-Sadness and Sorrow from the series "Naruto"- It makes me want to empathize with the person who is feeling sad.
- ❖ Scary/Creepy-Annihilate from Spiderman: Across The Spider Verse- It makes me feel scared of the unknown.
- ❖ Contemplation-Largo by Antonin Dvorak- It makes me think deeply and the song flows melodically.
- ❖ Hopeless to Hopeful-Orange by seven oops-It makes me feel sad at the start, but as the song progresses it feels hopeful and cheerful.

Lastly, the lyrics can set the mood of a song too. However, I don't even understand the lyrics of many songs, but I still feel an emotion. I think that this is the power of music.



IT'S Playtime by Koushya

Here are some hints for playing the:

- 1) Determine the characteristics of the Raga.
- 2) Recognize the contributions of the Scientist.
- 3) Matching is based on steps 1 and 2.

Example:

Newton groundbreaking work in the laws of motion and universal gravitation entails order and harmony. Which Raga listed above embodies these qualities?

<i>Ragas</i>	<i>Scientist</i>
Hamsadhvani	Albert Einstein
Bhairavi	Isaac Newton
Yamuna Kalyani	Rosalind Franklin
Shankarabharanam	Nikola Tesla
Sindhu Bhairavi	Ada Lovelace
Todi	James Clerk Maxwell
Madhyamavati	Carl Sagan
Vachaspati	Marie Curie



Inspirational Quotes

vyāso naigama carcayā mrdugirā valmīka janmā munih
vairāgye śuka eva bhaktiviSaye prahlāda eva svayam |
brahmā nārada eva cāpratimayoh sāhitya sangītayoh
yo rāmāmṛta pāna nirjita śivastam tyāgarājam bhaje ||

Here Tyagaraja Swami's disciple, Sri Walajapet Venkataramana Bhagavathar is equating tyAgarAja to various great personalities in various dimensions.

In naigamas (part of vEdas), Tyagaraja Swami is like

- In Vedic learning - vyAsa
- In soft language- vAlmiki
- In vairAgya - Suka
- In bhakti- prahlAda
- In sangIta sAhitya - nArada
- In relishing the rAma nAma - Siva

A Vyasa in Vedic learning, a Valmiki in his poetic language, Suka in his detachment, a Prahlada in his devotion, a Brahma and a Narada in his lyrics and his music, he rivals Siva in drinking the nectar of Rama's name; I salute that, Tyagaraja.

Stay tuned until our next newsletter!

