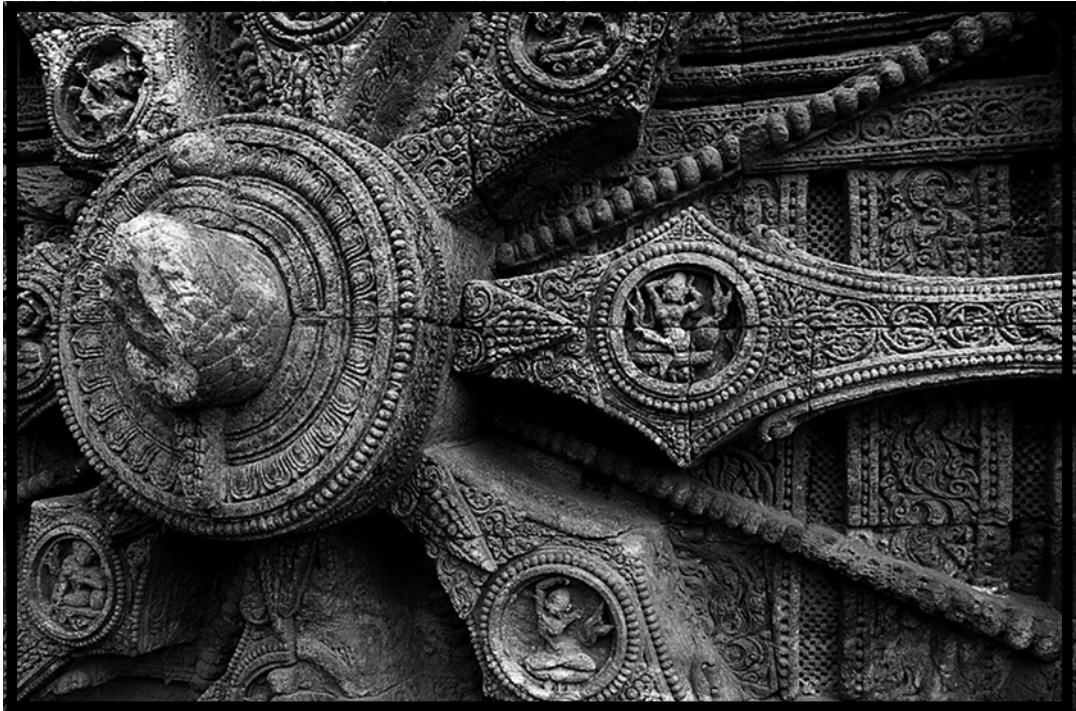


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**Layam** 

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## Editorial ~ Layavinyasam

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Sruti Laya Kendra has been organizing MLA (Musicians Living Abroad) concerts for the past 8 years. This is being done entirely with the aim of service, to benefit the talented musicians who come from foreign shores to Chennai in December. In the organization of these series, Sruti Laya Kendra derives no benefit, monetary or otherwise. These concerts are solely organized to give exposure to the Musicians Living Abroad.



In recent times, many organizations are also holding NRI concerts. Here, the performing NRI's contribute in some form, by sponsorship, membership, etc.

Of late, each of the NRI artistes is having direct dealings with the organizations. Such an understanding has enabled the NRI artiste to have many concerts in the season.

Here, at Sruti Laya Kendra, we pay the artiste for his concert. There, the case is different, and I do not want to go into that. I am happy that at least the aim of Sruthi laya Kendra in organizing MLA concerts has been realized and that these artistes have many platforms on which to perform in the season.

The MLA concerts were started to create awareness in Chennai about the artistes living abroad. Now that this has been fulfilled, another thought strikes me: should I continue organizing these concerts at all?

*Guru Karanikkudi' Mani*

Chief Editor

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# MUSIC AND CULTURE

By: Dr. M.A.Bhageerathi and Parur Harini

The word “Culture” is a Latin word. It has emerged from the term “Cultivation”. The term "culture" appeared first in its current sense in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries, to connote a process of cultivation or improvement, as in agriculture or horticulture. In the 19th century, the term developed to refer first to the betterment or refinement of the individual, especially through education, and then to the fulfillment of national aspirations or ideals. In the mid-19th century, some scientists used the term "culture" to refer to a universal human capacity. For the German non-positivist sociologist George Simmel, culture referred to "The cultivation of individuals through the agency of external forms which have been objectified in the course of history".

Simmel has given a beautiful explanation for the term “Culture”. Individuals have to be educated in such a way as to make them behave as humans. This can be achieved by introducing them to fine arts. Music is one of the fine arts and is also the finest of fine arts. Let us study the ways and means of using music to develop individuals in to cultured human beings. Shakespeare said “The man that hath no music is fit for treasons”. Hence, music is considered an essential component of our culture. All over the world, music belonging to various genres helps the society to culturally grow and maintain the flavor of the land. This is more so in the case of our mother land.

## MUSIC

Music is an art form whose medium is sound and silence. Its common elements are pitch , rhythm , dynamics, and the qualities of timbre and texture. The creation, performance, significance, and even the definition of music vary according to culture and social context. Music ranges from strictly organized compositions (and their recreation in performance), through improvisational musical forms. Music can be divided into different genres. Although, the dividing lines and relationships between music genres are often subtle, it is open to individual interpretation and occasionally controversial also. Within the arts, music may be classified as a performing art, a fine art, and auditory art. It may also be divided as art music and folk music. Music may be played and heard live, may be part of a dramatic work or film, or may be recorded.

To many people in many cultures, music is an important part of their way of life. Ancient Greek and Indian philosophy defined music as tones ordered horizontally as melodies and vertically as harmonies. The border between music and noise is always culturally defined—which implies that, even within a single society, this border does not always pass through the same place; in short, there is rarely a consensus ... By all accounts there is no single and intercultural universal concept defining what music might be.

The next step to this thought is, how is music and culture related in INDIA or BHARATAM?  
BhAratham:

India is a country rich in its culture. Our country is the one which is looked up on by other countries in the globe for her rich cultural heritage. Music is an essential part of our culture. It is a

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language by itself which teaches individuals to communicate in a sweet manner. The language Sanskrit mentions India as BhAratham. “BhAratham” is Bharatha’s country. Bharatha Muni is an eminent scholar who wrote Natya Sastra. One may wonder as to why Bharatha named his book as “Natya Sastra”. It is because “Natya Veda”, is considered to be the fifth Veda. It is also known as the “Gandharva Veda”. The term “Natya” denoted both music and dance during 1st century. It also included enacting drama. All the three put together carried our rich culture. Among these, this paper focuses on the musical component alone and its rich contribution to the cultural heritage of our country.

Both South Indian as well as North Indian music has contributed towards our rich heritage. Many eminent composers have composed musical pieces which are popular even today. Both North Indian as well as South Indian composers have composed innumerable compositions which stand today as pillars of our culture. Let us first focus on the South Indian contribution. Many South Indian composers have contributed towards our culture. Many South Indian treatises on music have also contributed immensely. Let us focus on some of them.

Tholgappiyam:

Tholgappiyar wrote the monumental treatise “Tolgappiyam”. This work is placed before 1st century BC that is, at least before two thousand years. Though it is a work on grammar, many musical references are found in this. This in fact is a treatise which goes to prove that Tamils are cultured humans from time immemorial. In this work, the land is divided into five namely, Palai, Kurinji, Mullai, Marudam and Neidal. According to the place where they lived, the Tamils had their own music and musical instruments. For instance, the people who were residing at the Neidal land had the fishing as their main occupation. They had the neidal pan (will be demonstrated) and the neidal parai which was also known as the Meenkotparai. The fact that there was music in each region itself shows that the Tamils lived with rich cultural background.

### **Sangam Literature:**

Many Sangam works have references to music and culture. Paripadal is a work belonging to the Sangam period. As the name itself indicates, all the songs are considered to be fit for singing. In the case of Paripadal the poem was written by one poet and music by another. In this work, in a song on Lord Muruga, there is a beautiful description about the culture that existed among the people who lived in Thirupparangundram. The song is as follows:

Thempadu Malarkuzhai Pundugil arimani  
Endizhai sumandu santham viraii  
Vidai aria asaiththa velan kadimaram  
Paravinar uraiyodu panniya visaiyinar  
Malaimalai adiurai yiyainar  
Melor uraiyulum vendunar yar yar

Similar references to the culture and music can be found in many sangam works. We can see the same type of description in Thirumurugatrupadai where Nakkirar describes about Thiruchchiralaivai and its culture.

Silappadikaram of Ilango Adigal:

The next important Tamil work which explains the culture of our land is Ilango Adigal’s

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Silappadikaram. Bharathiyar mentions it as “Nenejai Allum Silappadikaram”. In this work we have many compositions like “Vari padal”, which explain the cultural back ground very clearly. The capital cities Madurai and Pugar have been described as having all the amenities. This work clearly says that civilized humans should not go in for any relationship other than marital relationship. It also describes the highly civilized Tamil society, which had all the entertainments in the form of music, dance and sports. The Kanduka vari describes the throw ball and it is as follows: Thennavan vazhga vazhga endru sendru pandadiththadumme

The Atru vari explains the music and sports that existed in those days. It is as follows: Marungu vandu sirandarpa manippu adai adu porthu karungayal kanvizhiththolgi nandanthai vazhi kaveri

Development of culture and civilization is possible only societies where the rulers ensure peaceful life for their citizens. It is evident from Silambu that the Tamil kings were able to keep their citizens have a happy and peaceful life and in turn they kept the rich Tamil culture intact. The Tamils are always indebted to Ialngo Adigal for recording the cultural heritage that was prevalent in 1st century, which is relevant even today.

Contribution of the Saivaite saints:

The rich contribution made by the Saivaite saints like Karaikkal Ammaiyar, Thirunavukkarasar, Thirugnanasambandar, Sundaramurti Nayanar, Manikkavasagar, Thirumaligaithevar, Karuvur Thevar, Nambi Andar Nambi, Thirumular and Sekkizhar Peruman cannot be explained in a life time. That the Tamils only gave the rich classical music to the world is evident from their works. It was Karaikkal Ammaiyar, who mentioned the names of the svaras for the first time as Kural, thuththam, Kaikkilai, Uzhai, Ili, Vilari and tharam.

Worshipping God is part of civilization. The Thiruvangal malai of Thirunavukkarasar describes us as to how we have to worship the almighty. It is as follows:

Thalaiye ni vanangai thalai malai thalaikkanindu  
Thalaiyalebalitheurnthalaivani thaliye ni vanangai  
Kangal kanmingalo kadal nanjunda kandanthannai  
Endolvisinindradum piran thannai kangal kanmingalo

Thirugnana sambandar has described very beautifully the way in which one should behave while worshipping God. It is as follows:

Atram maraippadu mun paniye

Here Thirugnana Sambandar says that one should wear clothes which wrap one’s hip, so as to worship the Lord.

In saivism, having the sacred ashes on one’s forehead is considered very important. This is described in one of the Tevaram’s as “Mandiramavadu Niru”. In another padigam we have the reference to Lord Shiva as “Pusuvadum Venniru”. Also the devotees of the Lord are the ones who are given respect by other devotees, as found in the verses “paththaraippanivargal adiyarkkum adiyen” and “Siththathai sivan pal vaiththarkkum adiyen”. In other words, religion taught human to be humble in all circumstances. Thirumular in his Thirumandiram mentions “Anbe Sivam”. Here God is simply described as affection towards fellow humans. Sekkizhar in his

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Periyapuranam, not only has told the stories of the saivaite saints but also has described the civilized life that Tamils lived, in detail. In Periyapuranam we have the Thirunattu Chirappu and Thirunagar Chirappu where he elaborates up on the way of life. He says that there were “Parasu Vandiyar” and “Magathar”, who were singing in praise of the almighty at all times. “Parasu Vandiyar” are the main singers and “Magathar” are those who sang along. These very terms are found for the first time only in Sekkizhar’s Periyapuranam. Vaishnavaites have contributed equally.

#### **Vaishnavaites saints:**

The Panniru Alvars are generally known as Vaishnavaites saints. They have very beautifully described in Vainava thamizh the culture that was present in the Tamil society. Andal explains the institution of marriage beautifully in her hymn

“Varanam Ayiram Suzha valam vanda”. The marital bliss is explained by her in Nachiyar thirumozhi in many verses like “Karpuram Narumo”. Nammazhwar very beautifully describes the worldly needs in his hymn and says that by worshipping Mahavishnu one can get the needs fulfilled. The hymn is as follows:

Kulam tharum selvam thandidum adiyar paduthuyar ayina ellam  
Nilandaram ceiyum nilvisumarulum arulodu perunilamalikkum  
Valam tharum matrum thanthidum petra thayinum ayina ceiyum  
Nalamtharum sollai nan kandu kondan narayanavenu namam

#### **Arunagiri Nathar:**

In Arunagirinathar’s Thiruppugazh excellent references are there about our country and culture. One such Tiruppugazh is as follows:

Pagaru muththamizh poruli meiththavap  
Payanumeppadip palavazhvum  
Pazhaiya muththiyir padamu natpurap  
Paravu karpagath tharu vazhvum  
Pugalir budhdhiyur rarasu petrurap  
Poliyum arpudap peruvazhvum  
Bhuvana katridap palavidatthinaip  
Pugazh balaththinaith tharavenum  
Thagari larrakaith thalamvidappinaich  
Charavanaththinir payilvone  
Thani vanaththinir punamaraththiyaith  
Thazhuvu porpuyath thirumarba  
Sigara verpinaip pagirum viththagath  
Thiralayirchudark kumaresa  
Chezhumalarp pozhir kurava mutrapor  
Triruvudaikkazhip perumale

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**Sirkazhi Muvar (Tamil Trinity)**

The Tamil Trinity namely Arunachalakavi, Marimuthapillai and Muthuthandavar have composed innumerable songs in Tamil which have details about the Tamil culture. In the song “Esane Koti Suryprakasane” in the raga Pantuvarali, Muthuthandavar explains about the way in which human beings should behave in an indirect manner in the charana which begins with the words “thudiyen vananga vanja madiyen”. It may be argued that for behaving in a cultured manner one need not have faith in God. But the fear or feeling of God being there makes the human beings behave as humans and shun themselves from sins.

**Gopalakrishna Bharathi:**

Gopalakrishna Bharathi has infused many human values in his compositions. For instance, in the kriti “Bhava sagaram karai eralam”, in the raga Shanmukhapriya he has explained very well about what a good behavior is, in the charana. It is as follows:

Katra nulgala kamanoigal poma  
chiththa sudhdhi vandu terumo terado  
Bhakthi panni padai balakrishnan potrum  
chitrambalavanai sindanaigal seidal

Generally we ask permission from elders before approaching them. This is beautifully portrayed by Gopalakrishna Bharathi in the kriti “Varugalamo”, in the raga Manji.  
Saint Tyagaraja

Saint Tyagaraja is one of the greatest composers the world has seen. He is one among the Trinity of Karnatik Music. The other two being Syama Sastri and Muddusvami Dikshitar. The contribution of the trinity has been an immense wealth to learners of Karnatik music and continues to be so. The thoughts expressed in the lyrics not only teaches the student how to be, what to do, what should not be done and so on but also learning the culture and values instilled through the songs learnt.

One such composition of Tyagaraja is Dudukugala one of the Pancaratna kritis of Tyagaraja set to Gaura raga. This composition talks about the various sins committed by man. Saint Thyagaraja also lists all the errors one commits in life and asks Rama to redeem such a sinner. The sins described include just wandering around as though being satisfied with a full meal, giving sermons to people who are really not interested in listening or who do not have the capability to understand, self-styling oneself as a great person, and mistaking the dross for the real thing. Interestingly he lists four categories of people to whom he has made the claim of greatness; the ignorant, the riff-raff, the low social folk and women. In a play on words, he reproaches those who only desire wives and progeny. The kriti begins as follows:

Dudukugala Nanne Dora Koduku Brochuraa Yentho

Meaning: Who is there to save this great sinner?

This kriti further explains about the sins that one commits in youth without knowing the impacts and also explains that being born as human beings is a rarity and that humans should refrain from committing sins.



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**Mahakavi Bharathiyar:**

There is absolutely no introduction needed for Mahakavi Bharathiyar. He has beautifully explained as to what culture is and how a cultured human being should behave, in many of his poems. Our society generally gives importance only to male members. Hence, Bharathiyar sang “Penmai vazhgendru Kuthiduvomada”. He has beautifully worded humanness in many of his compositions. One such composition is “Bharatha desamendru peyar solluvar midi bhayam kolluvar thuyar pagai velluvar”. In this there is a beautiful paragraph explaining about the cultural behavior. It is as follows:

Sadi irandozhiya verillai endru  
Thamizh magal solliya sol amudamenbom  
Nidineriyinindru pirarkkudavum  
Nermaiya melavar kizhavar matror

**Bharathi Dasanar:**

He is another legendary poet. He has written only one poem under the head “Isaiththamizh”, where he has beautifully explained the culture and civilization of Tamils very nicely. The poem is as follows:

Meysai vilallketri narkali midil amarden nan  
Asai Tamizh padiththen ennarumai amma arugil vandar  
Misai thamizh mannar tham pagaiyai vendra varalatrai  
Osaiyudan padiththen Annai magizhvutradai enna solven  
Senthamizh nattinile vazhgindra seyizhaiyar yevarum  
Vanda virundombum vazhakkaththai vai vittu sollugaiyil  
Anda thamizhannaiyin mugaththinil anbu perugiyade  
Yenda vagai uraippen ketta pinbum innum sol endruraiththar  
Kitta nerungi yennaip pillai yendru kenji anrundenai  
Sottuvadaippola vai thirandu sol oru padal endrar  
Kattu karumbana isaiththamizh kadinil kettavudan  
Ettuvagai selvamum than petrar ennai sumandu petrar

**Conclusion:**

Many musical treatises have recorded the culture of the Tamils and their civilization. Exclusive write ups can be given about each one of these words. Due to paucity of time only a tipoff the iceberg is presented above. Hail our culture. The most apt concluding words to this lecture will be “Vazhiya Sentamizh Vazhga natramizhar, Vazhiya Bharata mani tirunadu Vande Mataram Vande Mataram”.

Kudos to our culture and our civilization.

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## Events

**Guru Priya Layavidyalaya Trust** conducted the 78th Guru Pooja Aradhana of Pudukkottai Sri Dakshinamurthy Pillai at the Arulmigu Subramanya Swami Temple, Woriyur, Trichy (Pooja), and Aradhana at the Handloom Association Thirumana Mandapam in June. Sangeetha Vidwans and Nadaswaram Vidwans from all over Tamil Nadu paid homage. Sri A.K.C. Natarajan presided over the function and honoured Vidwan Sri B.R.Rajagopalan and Trichy Sri T.S.Sivasubramanian with the Pudukkottai “Sri-la-sri Dakshinamurthi Pillai’ Award and a Purse.

**Sarvani Sangeetha Sabha Trust** conducted concerts by Kumari S.J.Jananiy (disciple of Dr M.Balamurali Krishna) and Kumari Mantha Srirama (disciple of Sri Ivaturi Vijeewara Rao) at the Raga Sudha Hall, Mylapore. Both these concerts were held in the month of June 2014.

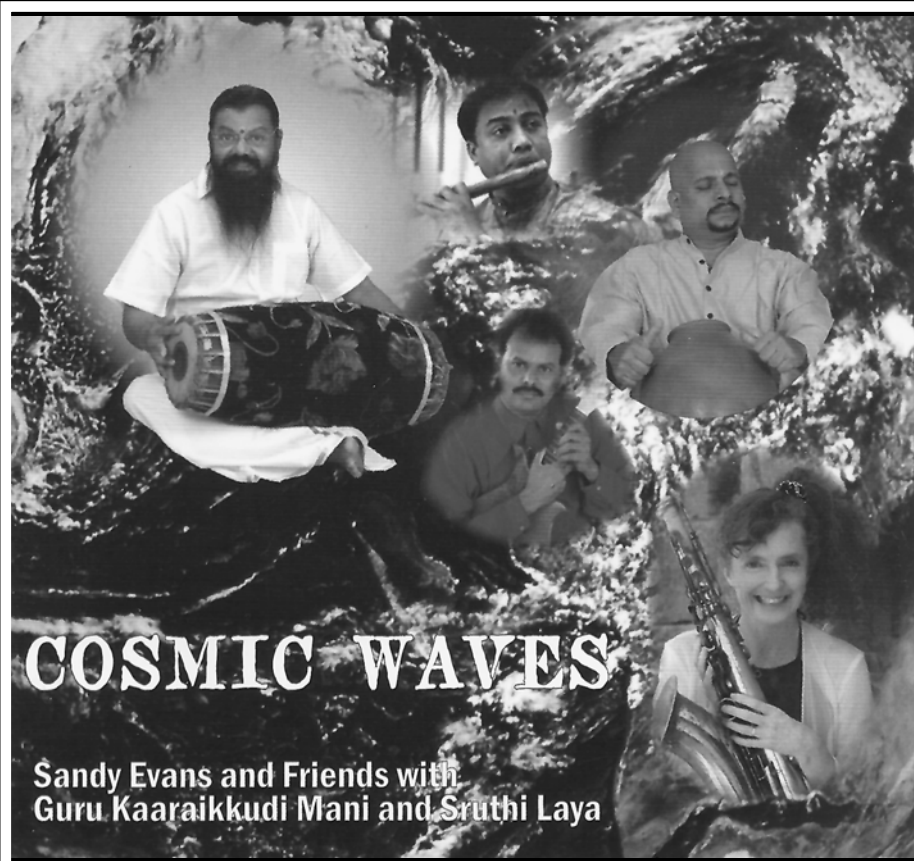
**Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Coimbatore Kendra** held a function to felicitate Shri S. Vaidyanathakrishnan, Former Director, Faculty of Fine Arts, Bhavan’s Coimbatore Kendra, on his 80th Birthday. Vidwan Sri Neyveli R. Santhanagopalan, Sri N.V. Nagasubramaniam (Senior Advocate) and Sri D. Balasundaram (Chairman, Coimbatore Capital Ltd.) offered felicitations. This was followed by a concert by Sri Neyveli R.Santhanagopalan and party. The function was held at the Bhavan’s Auditorium, R.S.Puram, Coimbatore.

**Lalitha Kala Vedika** held a special concert on Annamacharya by Priya Sisters Shanmukhapriya and Haripriya at the Tattvaloka Auditorium, Teynampet in June. This programme was dedicated to the memory of Sri B.V.S.S. Mani, founder of Lalitha Kala Vedika.

**Natyarangam**, (the dance wing of Narada Gana Sabha Trust) held the 18th Annual Bharathanatyam Festival ‘Upanishad Bharatham’ at the Sadguru Gnanananda Hall in August. Pujoyasri Prema Pandurang inaugurated the festival. Sri R. Krishnamoorthy, President, Narada Gana Sabha, presided. The following artistes were honoured: Smt Chitra Visweswaran (Bharatanatyam Exponent and Guru), B. Kannan (Veena Accompaniment for Natyam) – Sudharani Raghupathy Endowment Award, Vaibhav Arekar (Senior Dancer)- Obul Reddy Endowment Award, Manjula Amaresh (Talent Promotion)- Vasanthalakshmi Narasimhachari Endowment Award, Rajkumar Bharathi (Music Composer for Natyam)- Special Award of Excellence.

**Sri Krishna Gana Sabha** held its 59th Gokulashtami Sangeetha Utsavam in August at the Dr Nalli Gana Vihar, T.Nagar. Sri Aravind Sitaraman, President, Cisco Inclusive Growth inaugurated the festival and conferred the Birudhu ‘Diamond Jubilee Sangeetha Choodamani 2014’ on Veena Vidhushi Smt Jayanthi Kumaresh and ‘Sangeetha Choodamani’ on Vidwan Sri Mannargudi A. Easwaran. Vidwan Sri Rajkumar Bharathi received the Acharya Choodamani award. Smt Aruna Sairam felicitated. The function was followed by ‘Indhra Dhanush’, a Galaxy of Melody cum Percussion ensemble.

**A function was held by the children of Shri M.A. Kalyanakrishna Bhagavathar** to commemorate his birth centenary. This was held in August at the Bharathiya Vidya Bhavan main hall. Vidwan Sri T.N.Krishnan was the chief guest and this was followed by a veena concert by Smt Lakshmi Ranganathan, daughter and disciple of Sri M.A.Kalyanakrishna Bhagavathar. ●



**Cosmic Waves:**

**Sandy Evans: Tenor and Soprano Saxophone**

**Sruthi Laya: Guru Kaaraikkudi Mani: Mridangam, Konnakol**

**B.V. Balasai: Bamboo Flutes, U.P. Raju: Electric Mandolin,**

**'Ghatam' V. Suresh: Ghatam**

**Australian guest artist:**

**Alister Spence: Acoustic Piano (Tracks 2, 5 and 6); Brett Hirst: Electric Bass**

**(Track 3); Roger Dean: Computer manipulation of drones (tracks 4 and 6);**

**James Greening: Sousaphone (track 7)**

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