

PRASANNA WARRIER

Favoured Music Teacher

Popularly addressed as Prasanna teacher by her students and *chechi* by her friends, Prasanna Warriar is a well known name among the carnatic music teachers of Mumbai. Today she is one of the busiest teachers in town, with students of all ages from the old to the very young.

Lakshmi V

From a very young age Prasanna Warriar revealed a striking talent for music. Recognizing this, her parents enrolled and encouraged her to learn music from AIR artiste Guru K. Kunjiraman Bhagavathar in Calicut. She learnt under him till the age of 16 and thus a strong foundation for Carnatic music was laid.

"My ambition in life is to spread South Indian classical knowledge to as many students as possible, so that the tradition remains unbroken and enduring," Prasanna says.

Prasanna was born in Wynad district in a picturesque little town called

Mananthawadi. Her parents were K. Kunhiraman Warriar and Lakshmi Warasyar.

After some years, she went to Palakkad to join the Chembai Music College and strengthened her base in classical Carnatic Music.

Prasanna's gurus in Palakkad were C. S. Krishna Iyer, Pudukode Krishnamoorthy and Kedarnath. Recognizing her passion, her teachers taught her with great care and she passed her course with flying colours. Her subsidiary subject was the veena. She

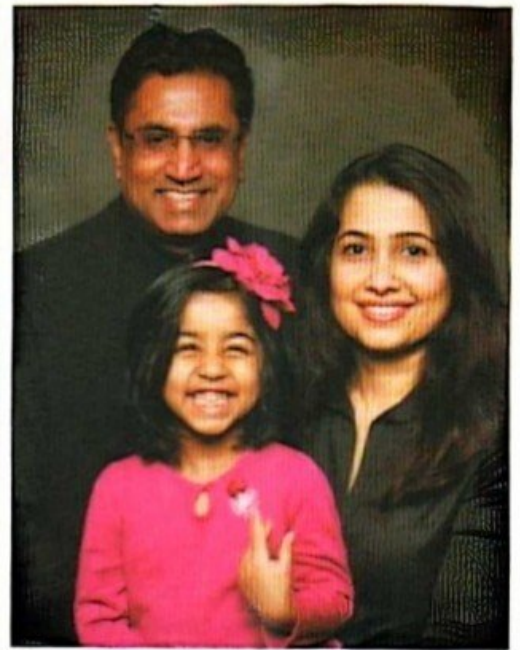


Prasanna participating with her accompanist at the Thyagaraja Aradhana at Thakur Complex, Mumbai





Prasanna's son Pramod and his family



Prasanna's daughter Sunita with her family

attained the *ganabhushana* diploma in 1966. Prasanna had learnt classical dance at a very young age, and this came to her help when she started composing music for dance programmes and singing for the same.

Prasanna is married to Mohandas Warriar, son of Kaithapram Edamana Illath Damodaran. He was in the army and his postings took him to different places in India namely Bangalore, Hyderabad, Delhi.

Prasanna's travelling with her husband to all parts of the country instilled in her a great national pride which she proudly carries like a medal.

After 15 years of army service, her husband retired from the Army and joined Air India in Mumbai. The family settled down in Mumbai. Prasanna started her advanced music classes under TR Balamani, one of the senior most Carnatic teachers of Mumbai whom she reveres and from whom she has been learning for about 25 years.

"To have met and learnt at the feet of Balamani teacher is one of the most happiest and fortunate occurrences of my life. I am truly grateful to her." Prasanna has also learnt Hindustani Music under Geetha Chanda, an AIR artiste.

She has presented several classical concerts and sung for dance programmes within the country and abroad. Prasanna has composed music for the dance ballet *Adi Shankaracharya* written by poet Krishnan Parapally. For this she was awarded the Udyogamandalam Vikraman Pillai's Dance Academy Award.

"My only desire is to spread the knowledge of our music which is unparalleled in the world. My greatest fear is when I see some of my finest students being weaned away from the world of Classical music by the dazzle and glitter of reality and stage shows. That is very distressing and disheartening. But I have great hopes for the future. The groundswell of musical talent is so vast that I am certain that this joyous resounding world of Carnatic music will flourish for ever."



Prasanna's husband Mohandas Warriar

Prasanna runs her Carnatic music class *Swararnavam* in Mumbai where she teaches Carnatic Music to about 300 students coming from all over Mumbai. Every year she conducts Thyagaraja Aradhana at her music school where she and her students sing the pancharatna kritis of Thyagaraja. Some of her students have grown up to be full-fledged singers, settled in India and abroad. She is Guru to Riva Rathod - the daughter of the well-known ghazal singing couple Roop Kumar Rathod and Sonali Rathod. Despite being a North Indian and having learnt Hindustani Classical Music, Riva learnt under Prasanna for 7 years till she became proficient enough to stage a Carnatic classical concert in Mumbai.

She composed music of lyrics written by Chowallur Krishnankutty for her student Hema Ravishankar's first music album *Gokulam*.

Among her students are Vijay - a talented classical singer from Mumbai. Srinath Ram Warriar, under her able guidance released an album - *Narayaneeyam* under the music direction of the doyen of Malayalam music Vaikom Dakshinamoorthy Swami. Her other senior students are Chandini Vishwanath, Divya, Saumya, Shruthy, Shweta, Swati, Ambili, Marina, Srilatha, Priya etc in Mumbai.

She has a daughter, Sunita who lives in Canada with her husband Shantakumar and daughter Riyanna. Sunita is an accomplished Mohiniattam dancer and has several stage performances to her credit. Prasanna has a son, Pramod, who is based in Dubai with his wife Prita and children Arnav and Aditi. ■