

Artiste of the month

-Lakshmi



Radha P Namboodiri

Nurturing Mumbai's Music Talents

Radha P Namboodiri is an accomplished Carnatic singer who has been a disciple of one of the stalwarts of Carnatic Music, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer. Presently she is Principal and Director of the Shanmukhananda Bharatiya Sangeetha Mahavidyalaya in Mumbai.

Radha P Namboodiri started her career with All India Radio in 1975 as Programme Executive (Music) in Thiruvananthapuram. In 1985 she was promoted and transferred to Bombay Doordarshan as Asst Station Director. Later she became Dy Director, Bombay Doordarshan and Director, Thiruvananthapuram Doordarshan. Radha retired as Director, Central Sales Unit, Commercial Broadcasting Services of AIR, Mumbai in January 2006. Since June 2006 she is Principal and Director of the Shanmukhananda Bharatiya Sangeetha Mahavidyalaya in Mumbai.

Radha was born and brought up in Mumbai. Her father late A R Warriar worked with Mitsubishi and her childhood was spent in Shivaji Nagar. Her mother is late Narayani Warriar. Both of them belong to Thrissur. Music has been a part of her family. Her father founded the cultural organization *Pataaka* through which he brought kathakali artistes from Kerala and arranged their performances in Mumbai.

“There is no shortcut to music. You have to practise a lot of intelligent singing. You have also to listen to a lot of Carnatic music sung by master musicians. Try to attend music concerts.

“There was a lot of music in my father's family. My parents were keen that I learn Carnatic music. Even as a child I used to listen to my sister learning music.” Radha

reminiscences.

Radha is a BA (Hons) with English Literature and Sanskrit language from Mumbai University. She has also passed the KOVID Sanskrit exam with First class from Bhavan's College, Mumbai. She learnt Carnatic music initially from T V Ramamurthy in Mumbai. After graduation she shifted base to Chennai to study the two year Sangeetha Vidwan course from Central College of Carnatic Music and passed it with first class. She won the Government of India Scholarship and chose to undergo advanced training with the eminent musician Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, and his leading disciple T M Thyagarajan for about 7 years. One of Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer's disciples

G Seethalakshmi whom she knew while studying music at Chennai, inspired her to learn under the veteran musician.

“My parents were the driving force. They gave me a lot of opportunity to master the art and made me a performing artiste.”

Achievements

Radha has won several Awards and Certificates of Merit from various Institutions for her Carnatic music performances. She has won prizes in several music competitions. She has also given performances in Mumbai, Chennai, participated in the Madras Music Academy during the famous December Music Season and her concerts have been broadcast over the radio and telecast over the TV. She was



Radha Namboodiri performing at a concert

examiner in Classical Carnatic Music conducted by Mumbai University. She has performed in Japan, at the Tokai University, visited Sweden for a music concert in the Kista World music festival and conducted workshops at Stockholm Royal College of Music.

Radha enjoys her present stint at The Music School. "I am grateful to the Shanmukhananda Bharatiya Vidyalaya for giving me this opportunity of teaching music to many aspiring singers and imparting to them what I have learnt. My aim is to groom young talent and make them performing artistes. Two of my students aged 13 and 14 have won the CCRT (Centre for Cultural Resource and Training) scholarship and are doing advanced study in Carnatic music. I have groomed them to participate in several Classical concerts where they have always bagged prizes," she says.

Many performing Carnatic singers and teachers of Mumbai are taking advanced music classes from her. Radha believes in the oral tradition of teaching music and her students listen to her and learn her singing. They are not encouraged to pore over books and sing.

"Whatever I have achieved in Music is due to my guru Semmangudi Mama, T M Thyagarajan and T V Ramamurthy. We used to spend the whole day at Semmangudi mama's place, while we were studying under him and he used to take good care of us. The well-known Suguna Purushothaman used to come there to learn the finer nuances of music from him and she was also our inspiration.



Radha Namboodiri and her students paying a musical tribute during Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer's Centenary Celebrations at the Shanmukhananda Sabha in Mumbai. We wanted to sing like her."

Advice to aspiring musicians

"There is no shortcut to music. You have to practise a lot of intelligent singing. You have also to listen to a lot of Carnatic music sung by master musicians. Try to attend music concerts. These days there are classical Carnatic music reality shows on TV. You should watch the shows and heed the views of the judges on the singing of the participants. All this will help you to fine tune your singing," Radha advises students of Carnatic music.

Radha puts in daily at least one and a half hours of practice in singing. She is also editor of the Sabha's Quarterly

Shanmugha, a cultural journal.

Radha is married to P M Namboodiri, a former employee of Premier Electronics. They have a daughter Priya who is married and has a two year old daughter.

Shanmukhananda Sabha's Sangeetha Vidyalaya is an educational institution that teaches the two classical systems of Indian Music Carnatic and Hindustani. It covers the theoretical and practical aspects of music and has vocal and instrumental classes including veena, violin, mridangam, tabla and harmonium. It has a basic seven year course. It has a two year Diploma Course in Vocal Carnatic Music which is recognized by the University of Mumbai.

SOME HOUSEHOLD REMEDIES

- Tara R Menon

1. Sprain in the Legs Make a plaster with honey (1 tsp) and a little lime (*chunab*). Apply this to the affected part as a thin layer and cover it up with cotton to hold it securely. If necessary put a bandage on it. Usually one or two applications should be enough. This can be repeated if required.

2. Sore-throat and cough Make small balls of a mixture of *haldi* (turmeric) powder and little jaggery and store them in a small container. Take one at a time, put in the mouth and suck on it and swallow the saliva. This can be repeated till one gets relief.

3. Common cold and fever Take some lemongrass (2 or 3 springs), ¼ ginger, a few peppercorns, a few tulsi leaves and jaggery. Boil all the above ingredients in two cups of water till the quantity reduces to one cup. This *kada* (brew) can be taken as warm as you can at bed time before you sleep. Next morning you will surely feel better. If required this brew can also be

taken during the day.

4. Injury due to fall Apply some ghee mixed with haldi powder on the injury. It will subside quickly. In situations where ice is not available immediately, this can be applied since the ingredients are household items.

5. In an injury where it has become blue-black: Take some alum and haldi (preferably whole, otherwise, powder). Grate the alum on a stone with water. Grate some haldi or add haldi powder. Make a paste of both the above. Heat and apply this as hot as you can bear on the affected part. Cover it with cotton-wool. This can be repeated till the injury heals.

6. Diarrhoea dysentery Take a tsp of *Khus Khus* with sugar, chew well and then swallow it. This gives instant relief.

7. Indigestion Drink lime juice with a little ginger, salt and sugar. It gives immediate relief.