

CHAPTER 12

THE DEVELOPMENT AND EXTENSION OF THE *MARGAM* IN THE LATE 20TH CENTURY



The *Margam* created by the Tanjore Quartet was used extensively as a tool in teaching as well as in performance. This was largely restricted to Tamil-speaking areas of the country till late 1800 A D and later to the other regions of India and outside. Mostly the traditional Bharatanatyam *Margams* were danced to songs in Tamil and Telugu. As Bharatanatyam travelled north and spread to other parts of the country, especially to the non-Tamil-speaking areas, dancers and choreographers began to explore new ideas. They worked and especially experimented with the *Margam* as it was so much the standard format of solo dance teaching and performance. They will not touch the physical language, the technique, the form or the content of the dance form. But worked with the next most important component – the language and at places certain musical aspects of the content.

Bharatanatyam began to become popular out of South India but very few dancers and even less in the audience could understand the lyrics with almost no exposure to the language of the lyrics and the Carnatic music. They had to go by what was explained before the performance or whatever was written in the program brochure handed out to the audience. Some of the performers and choreographers, teacher/gurus came from strong traditions of literature and music in their own languages. To teach the students beauty of Bharatanatyam and to reach larger local audiences, one had to become innovative. A lot of creative and innovative activities started. In this context, a few of them began to set songs in their own regional languages to Carnatic music, later even to Hindustani music, though the dance followed the *Margam* pattern of *Alarippu*, *Jatiswaram*, etc.

This was not as easy as it sounds. For the choreographer who decides to work on a *Margam* with *sahitya* in Gujarati, for example, it is a tough road ahead. The choreographer must know in-depth the basics, the nuances and the challenges that the traditional *Margam* offers (even when it is choreographed with Tamil lyrics). There should be impeccable command over the musicality and structure of the song, the *kriti* and understanding of the poetic power to create the same structure for the *pallavi*, the *anupallavi* and the *charnam*. The *Varnam* offers the most complex challenge. The Tamil/Telugu *sahitya* has a different structure that meets the requirements of the *Varnam*. It is not possible to adapt an *Ashtapadi* or a *Kavita* or a *Meera Bhajan* to the demands of the *Varnam* just by inserting *teermanams* or *swaras* in between the lines. A popular example here is the adaptation of the poem,

Mukhdani Maya Lagi Re ... to the *Varnam*. It did help the students and audiences who did not understand neither the language nor its nuances, to learn and see something like a *Varnam*, but it cannot be a real *Varnam* as it did not adhere to its structure at all. It could not rise to the *Varnam*'s challenge. A few dancer-choreographers such as the late Smt. Anjali Merh understood these dynamics very well; but it was primarily because of the total command she had over the Tamil language and literature as well as over the Gujarati language (she was a poet too!) and over Carnatic and Hindustani music. As such an accomplished person, she could successfully create a *Margam* in Gujarati. Similarly, Smt. Sucheta Chapekar choreographed a *Margam* in Marathi, titled *Nritya Ganga*.

The next stage of experimentation came in the area of subject matter. The original Tanjore Quartet *Margam* was a medley of different content material, the main factor holding it together was the adherence to the structure of each item. As the challenge to do the *Margam* choreography differently became widespread, after or parallel to language, the next aspect worked upon by creative choreographers was putting together a theme-based *Margam*. Komala Vardhan choreographed a *Margam* based on the Ramayana. Rama Vaidyanathan choreographed a *Margam* on birds.

DIFFERENT MARGAMS CONCEPTUALISED AND CREATED BY GURUs and CHOREOGRAPHERS

“DANCE OF THE BIRDS” Margam by Dr. Aarshiya Sethi and Smt. Rama Vaidyanathan

Dr. Arshiya Sethi is a dance-scholar and a birding enthusiast who conceptualized this *Margam* around a subject she was passionate about. She collaborated with well-known Bharatanatyam exponent Rama Vaidyanathan and presented “Dance of the Birds” *Margam* on World Dance Day 2009 at a programme organised by WWF-India and the Delhi Bird Group. Putting together such a *Margam* was not an easy exercise and it took Arshiya Sethi and Rama Vaidyanathan a good five years to put the recital together as an organic whole that combined ‘image, metaphor and poetry about birds as part of the traditional vocabulary of dance’ along with inputs from music composer, G S Rajan. (Nattuvangam by Dr S Vasudevan, Vocal by K Venkateshwaran, Mridangam by Sumod Sreedharan, Flute by Rajat Prasanna). The

“Dance of the Birds” *Margam* comprised the items, Mayura (Allaripu), Vrikshanjali (Pada), Virahini Varnam, Lament to the Birds (pada), Tillana (Flight to Freedom). (reference: correspondence between researcher and concerned dancer-choreographers).



Fig.1 and 2 : Rama vaidyanathan

Mayura Alarippu was a traditional opening piece that captured the movement dynamics of the Peacock, the Indian National bird; dancer used the *Mayura Hasta* as the only *mudra* in the dance choreography, and the dance tried to visualize the peacock, a symbol of beauty and grace, in an *Alarippu* that has a cycle of 5 and a half beats.

Vrikshanjali (An Ode to the Tree, Habitat of the Birds) is a poem in Sanskrit by Shatavdani Ganesan which articulates the philosophy of the tree – the more it travels downwards the higher it reaches towards the sky, and the wider its branches reach out, so deeper a man introspects, higher his soul rises towards spiritual light. The main habitat of bird life is the tree, and if we conserve our trees, we conserve our birds.

Virahini Varnam was a Meera *bhajan*, ‘*Jhukkuaaire badariya sawan ki, sawan ki, man bhavan ki*’ (Look at the dark clouds, that symbolize the advent of the monsoon; offering the promise of coolness to the burning earth just as Meera burns in the passion of her Lord). The choreography is inspired by a medieval miniature painting that shows the *virahini nayika* gazing at the birds in a clouded sky.

Lament of the Birds (Pada) is a compilation of Tamil verses from the Alwar saints’ *Divya Prabandham* where the *nayika* separated from Lord Vishnu confides in birds --the Cuckoo, the Parakeet and the Mynah.

Tillana is Flight of the *Hamsa* where the flight of birds is developed as a metaphor for liberation of the soul. Just as birds defy gravity and fly off to freedom, we too need to defy our egos which pull us down, to achieve liberation. This *Tillana* is a celebration of the legendary Indian bird, the swan or the Hamsa.

“THE STORY OF CHRIST” Margam by Dr. Francis Barboza

Francis Barboza, Ph. D, researched elements of Christianity in Indian Dance Forms for his doctoral thesis in Dance. Degrees in Philosophy and Theology further strengthened his understanding of Christian ideology and how it can be adapted and interpreted in the strong philosophical-spiritual overtones that a serious *Margam* needs along the spine for its performance. Based abroad, Barboza gives full recitals in Bharatanatyam on both Hindu and Christian themes.

His Christian-themed *Margam* begins with an Invocation (with lyrics from *Kristubhagavatam*), then the traditional Pushpanjali, followed by *Jagatpathim Sthuthi*, (a kind of *padam* that tells the story of that supreme self-sacrifice of Jesus Christ, willed by the Creator of the Universe in the beginning of time, and which rouses the most sublime sentiments in our hearts. This is followed by a *Shlokam* on the Holy Trinity and *Yesu Kautuvam* (in praise of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit and a *Kautuvam* in praise of Jesus Christ describing his nature and great works. and another *Shlokam* on the Genesis summarizes the Book of Genesis. The *Varnam* comes next, ‘Lord of the Dance’ in Malayalam (translated from the original in Kannada), and describes Christ’s heavenly dance in the morning of Creation, at Bethlehem the spot on Earth where he was born, with the fishermen James and John, on the Sabbath to cure the lame and the blind, and finally the dance on the Cross. The

next *Padam*, ‘*Amalamonohari Ambike*’ is in praise of the Virgin Mother Mary. It is followed by the *Tillana*, where the *sahitya* describes the crucifixion of Christ, the mockery by the Pharisee and finally the Resurrection of Christ on the Cross. The Resurrection is celebrated by a forceful *tandava* dance, ending with the *Mangalam*.

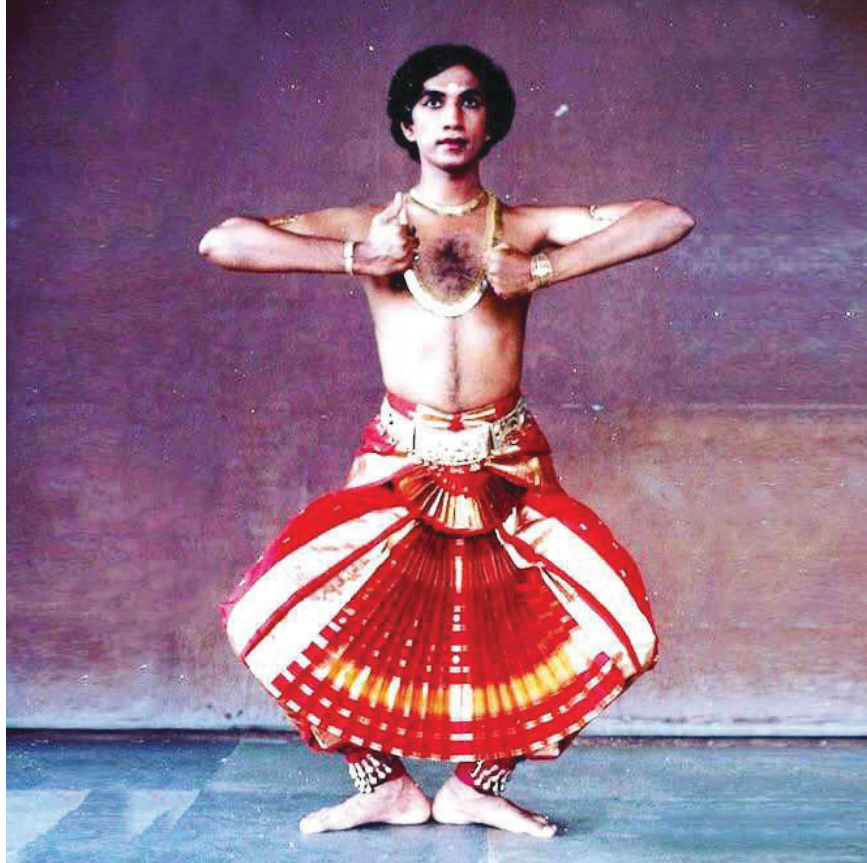


Fig. 3 : Dr. Francis Barboza

Invocatory dance: *Ragam:* Kalyani, *Talam:* Adi

Lyrics Dr. Cherian CMI (transliterated from Kristubhagavatam by Prof. P.C Devasia)

Music Shri. Sethumadhavan, Language Malayalam

Pushpanjali: traditional Bharatanatyam composition

Jagatpathim Sthuthi : The story of that supreme self-sacrifice, willed by the Creator of the Universe in the beginning of time, and later foretold by the saintly sages, and which rouses the most sublime sentiments in our hearts, I shall now relate.

Slokam on Holy Trinity & Yesu Kautuvam

Ragam Naatai, *Talam* Adi, Music & Lyrics Shri Sethumadhavan Language Tamil.

The *Sloka* is in praise of the Holy Trinity Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This will be followed by a *Kautuvam* in praise of Lord Jesus. *YesuKautuvam* is in praise of Lord Jesus describing his nature and great works.

***Sloka*: Genesis**

Ragam : Ragamalikai, *Talam*: Adi

Slokams are small musical rhymes that summarize a whole epic or a book into a compact nut-shell. This *Sloka* is based on the book of Genesis (the story of man).

Varnam

Ragam: Mohanam, *Talam*: Adi, Language: Malayalam, Music Guru Mohanraj and Ramani, Lyrics Shri Sethumadhavan (transliterated from the original Varnam in Kannada scripted by Shri. Danti Manipura).

This central item brings out the consummate caliber of the artiste who portrays through the gamut of imagery where Jesus is accepted as the LORD of Dance. This item is based on the hymn “the LORD OF THE DANCE” by Sydney Carter. “I danced in the morning when the world was created. I came down from Heaven and I danced on the earth, at Bethlehem I had my Birth”.

Padam : Amalamonohari Ambike

Ragam: Ragamalikai, *Talam*: Adi, Language : Malayalam

The padam is addressed to loving mother Virgin Mary describing her virtues.

Tillana

Ragam: Atana, *Talam*: Adi, Music and Lyrics Prof. C.V. Chandrasekhar

Language: Tamil

This, the concluding item of the Bharatanatyam Recital, is an exquisite composition in pure *Nritta*, where beautiful sculptural poses are exhibited. In the *Sahitya* (lyrics) the birth, life, mission, passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are danced

Mangalam: On Jesus Christ

THE RAMAYANA Margam by Smt. Komala Vardhan

Noted Bharatanatyam dancer and choreographer and Guru Smt. Komala Vardhan is an out-of-the-box thinker. She conceptualized the *Ramayana Margam* wherein the epic is narrated in capsules of the different items of the *Margam*.



Fig. 4 and 5: Smt. Komala Vardhan

For all the items, the verses of Tulsidas' '*Sri Ramacharitmanas*' are utilized. The opening item, *Pushpanjali* comprises the verses from the *AranyaKanda*. The verses were interspersed between the rhythmic dance sequences of abstract syllables. This is followed by the *Kirtana*, *BalaLeelaParamaManohara*. It has been picked up from *BalaKanda*, depicting the childhood of Sri Rama and his three brothers as toddlers. The *Shabdham* takes one step ahead in the epic and tells the story of the destruction of demons by the young Rama-Lakshmana, who thus protect the *Yagna* of sage Vishwamitra. Simple rhythmic patterns with appropriate *Shollukattus* / *Bolsare* conveniently woven into the song (verses from the *Bala Khanda*) to conform to the format of a *Shabdham*. The choreographer has included highlighting the feelings of *Dashratha* as he sends his teenage sons on this perilous mission. The *Varnam*, composed in Raagamalige to suit the variety of moods depicted with appropriate *chittaswaram* and *charanam*, focuses on the *Sita Swayamvara* and the wedding of Sri

Rama and Sita. The next item, a *Padam* – '*Sita Apaharan*' It is a long *Padam*, divided into three conceptual parts – the insult of Soorpanakha and her complaint to brother Ravana, Ravana plotting to avenge that insult with Maricha, and finally his abduction of Sita. The verses are from the *Aranya Khanda*. This is followed by another *Padam* – *Bali Vadh* – situated in *Kishkinda*. The lyrics are from the *Kishkinda Khanda* and the *Sundara Khanda*. One more *Padam* follows – *Ram Virah* – where *Sringara Rasa* has a special place. The choreographer uses a beautiful passage in the *Sundara Khanda*. The last item is yet another *Padam* – *Rama-Ravana Yudh*. The choreographer has selected lines from different *Chaupals* and *Dohas* from the *Lanka Khanda* to bring alive the drama of the battle scenes, the settings and the action.

Pushpanjali - Floral Salutations

“Where as one could begin with an invocation and salutation to Shiva as Natraja or Ganesha. I thought it would be very appropriate to offer salutations to Sri Rama at the beginning of *Shri Ram Charit Manas*”. Komalaji has chosen verses from *Aranya Kanda* where Tulsidas has describes Shri Rama. In this text the story of *Ramayana* is narrated as a conversation between Shiva and Parvathy (Shankara and Bhavani). As this style of narration is different from the other versions of *Ramayana*, the choreographer has indicated it by incorporating in the opening item. For the rhythmic dance sequences passages of abstract syllables *Shollus* were composed and the verses were interspersed.

Kirtan: Baal Leela-Rama's Childhood

There are no rhythmic passages in this Item. Going through *Bala Khanda* Komalaji decided to depict the childhood of Sri Rama and his three brothers when they were just tiny tots. Following the invocation, *Chaupal* beginning with the words *Parama Manohara* was adopted for the presentation.

Shabdham: Destruction of Demons

The episode of Vishwamitra requesting King Dasharatha to send Rama and Lakshmana with him to protect the *Yagna* in the forest by destroying the demon Subahu and others. The episode has a story element complete in itself at the same time the narration of *Ramayana* progresses forward. Simple rhythmic patterns with appropriate *Shollukattus* are conveniently woven into the song to conform to the format of a *Shabdham*. These selected verses are from the *Bala Kanda* and structured as *Shabdham*.

Varnam-Sita Swayamvar

The 'Sita Swayamvar' episode is depicted as a *Varnam*. The element of *Sringara* lends nicely to be depicted in the *Varnam*. Starting with the description of the exquisite beauty of Rama and Sita, this item goes on to describe the breaking of the Bow by Rama and describes the marriage of Rama and Sita. Appropriate verses from the *Balakanda* are chosen for this *Varnam* in Ragamalika to suit the moods depicted with appropriate *chittaswaram* and *charanam*.

Padam: Sita Apaharan-Abduction of Sita

With the entry of Soorpanakha. She sees the two brothers Rama and Lakshmana and tries to entice them. Lakshmana cuts her nose and ears. She complains to Ravana, her brother. Ravana sends Maricha in the form of a golden deer to take Rama and Lakshmana away from Sita. When Sita is left alone. Ravana approaches her in the disguise of a *Sadhu* and forcibly carries her away on his *Rath*. Because of the story content and the dramatic impact of each incident, this *Padam* had to be narrated in the form of a monoballet. Verses were selected from the Aranya Khanda.

Padam: BaliVadh- Slaying of Bali

The choreographer has chosen a couple of lines from the verses in *Kishkinda Khanda* depicting the enmity between Bali and Sugriva and how Sri Rama watched them fight from behind a tree and at the appropriate moment killed Bali with his arrow. From *Kishkinda Kanda* the choreographer has leaped to *Sundara Kanda* to conclude this item with a description of Hanuman travelling to Lanka across the ocean.

Padam: Ram Virah – Pangs of Separation of Rama

Depiction of *Sringara* is very important element in a Bharatanatyam recital. It forms the theme of a number of Padams. In *Sundara Kanda* in this beautiful passage, Hanuman in *Ashoka Vatika*, describes with picturesque details to Sita the feelings of Sri Rama.

Padam Ram: Ravan Yudh – The Battle between Rama and Ravana

The battle scene in Lanka between Ravana's formidable army and Sri Rama's army of monkeys etc. is described in great detail by Tulsidas. The final battle between Sri Rama and Ravana is also vividly described.

SHISHU SADHANA MARGAM BY DR. MAMATA NIOGI NAKRA

Senior Guru and Bharatanatyam exponent Dr. Mamata Niogi Nakra builds an interesting *Margam* around the idea of childhood, the child's world of toys and dolls, of friendly animals and gentle giants. Engrossed in this world, the child understands

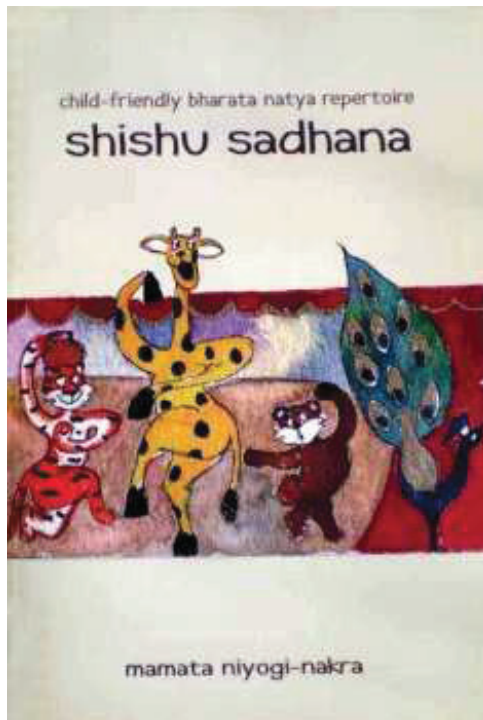
the reality of dealing with positive and negative feelings, and thus the complexities of the adult world. This *Margam* was composed for prestigious events related to the Child and has been performed mostly by talented young dancers (often children) from Mamata's popular dance school, Kala Bharati, in Montreal, Canada. She has written a book on Child-friendly Bharatanatyam Repertoire and brought out a DVD on the same. Her work has been presented at several global conferences on children's issues all over the world.



Fig.6 Dr. Mamata Niyogi Nakara with her student OS Arun

In this *Margam*, *Alarippu* and *Jatiswaram* are simple enough but in the *Jatiswaram*, the choreographer introduces the various musical instruments separately. For instance, the first *jati* is to the accompaniment of the mridanga, the second by the flute, the third by the veena, the fourth by the violin, and so on, thus familiarising the young dancers with the differences in sounds produced by wind and string instruments. The *Shabdham* introduces the child playing with a ball at a riverside and the ball rolling into the water beyond her reach. In her helplessness, she recollects Krishna's ball rolling into the Yamuna and the subsequent *Kaliadaman*. She prays to Krishna for help and to her delight, the ball rolls ashore. In this *Shabdham*, the dance movements centre on the playful act of bouncing a ball, an activity known to children all over the world. The element of devotion of the traditional *Shabdham*, is brought in when the dancer prays to Lord Krishna for help, as well as by the chanting at the end, which is designed also to get the audience involved and join in the action

by clapping along. The lyrics for the *Varnam* are composed in Sanskrit by Ghatam S. Karthick and tell the story of a child's friendship with a gentle giant. She finds him sleeping and tries different ways to wake him up. When they do not work, the dancer herself, in frustration, starts dancing vigorously in the hope that the sound of her dancing feet with bells will do the trick. It does, as he suddenly wakes up. This delights the dancer who invites him to sit down and watch her dance. With much interest he watches her dance asking for more. As soon as the dance is over and the dancer prepares to leave, the giant goes back to his favourite pastime: sleeping and snoring. The dancer leaves the stage and as the audience breaks into applause she rushes back and asks them to be quiet, as she does not want her friend to be woken up. The *Varnam* is followed by a *Padam*, Amar Putul, (The Doll Story) with lyrics in Bengali written and composed (with folk tunes) by the choreographer, to successfully explore the concept of the *Navarasa* and explain them to young dancers. The child-dancer comes onto the stage with her doll, Bharati, plays with her and the doll suddenly starts to speak and runs away from the child and hides. Confused, the child is at first saddened but later gets angry, and then when the doll is found, she finds it in tears. This arouses compassion and other emotions until the two become friends again and sing and dance, inviting children in the audience to join them. Thus it explores all the nine emotions offering a context the children would easily identify with. This is followed by a *Padam* titled 'Sequences' which is choreographed such that children-dancers use Bharatanatyam movements to create their own little pieces with narratives built around two different objects given to every dancer. This *Padam* had only percussion instruments to create the accompanying music. The next *Padam* is '*MeriChitthi*' (Letter to Lord Nataraja) with lyrics in Hindi by D. P B Sreenivas, where the child writes a letter to Lord Nataraja to whom she poses a number of questions and concludes by offering her gratitude for creating the art of dance which she enjoys. As the voice and the sound of the cymbals trail off, the dancer exits the stage doing the steps of hopscotch. Apart from representing something that a young dancer can relate to, the item helps her discover the various attributes of Lord Nataraja, the Lord of Dance, as she poses her questions. Even the element of devotion is introduced with age appropriateness in mind. The concept of devotion is not easy to imbibe at a tender age. One finds young dancers go through the movements of offering flowers at Shiva's feet and worshipping Him rather mechanically.



The joyful act of lovingly thanking Him for His creation of dance as incorporated in this piece, is in line with what a young person is more likely to do. The *Animal Tillana* is the most unusual piece, addressed to Lord Muruga with the lyrics of the *charanam* written in Tamil by Dr. P B Sreenivas. Peacocks, elephants, crocodiles, fishes, snakes, monkeys, deer – all come parading on the stage in the guise of the dancer with her palpable and infectious miming of animal movements. Each one has a segment dedicated to it while the dancer has a flexibility to add or subtract the number of animals she

wishes to include in her presentation of the item. Because of the very nature of the animal movements depicted, the choreography of this item offers a range of fascinating ways to explore space. The *Shabdham* is a lilting number that celebrates the boy-Krishna's win over the frightful Kalindi snake.

1) *Aradhana*

2) *AlarippuRaga- NataTala- Tisra*

3) *3)JatiswaraRaga -Hindolam Tala- Adi*

Duration 5' 32"

To enable the student to savour the differences in sounds produced by the wind and string instruments, way they are held for playing, a couple of *avartana*-swith only the instrument playing, have been added between the end of the retreat of one *jati* and the start of the next *jati*. Some poses and steps with the flute, the veena and the violin have added an interesting dimension to the choreography of the *Jatiswara*,

4) *Shabda RagamalikaTala Mishra-chapu*

Written V. A. K. Ranga Rao Telugu

5) *Varna Raga NatakurinjiTala Adi*

Sanskrit: Ghatam S. Karthick.

The first part of the Varnam deals with the dancer's ingenious efforts to wake up her friend, the giant, followed by her frustration with each of these failed attempts. In the second half the dancer herself, in frustration, starts dancing vigorously in the hope that the sound of her dancing feet with bells will do the trick.

6) *Pada: Amar Putul (The Doll Story)*

Raga - Bageshwari *Tala*- Adi (Tisra nadai)

“This item is based on a poem that I have composed in Bangla. Quite early into teaching Bharatanatyam, I had to grapple with the question of how best to transmit the concept of the *navarasa*, the nine emotions, to dance students who are too young to fathom the depth of emotions that comes only with maturity and experience.

In my effort to make the concepts of the different emotions accessible, I wrote a text in English, which made the rounds among the teachers and students as "The Doll Story". It touched on all the nine emotions in a context that was accessible to any child with a doll, which at a time when Barbies and Cabbage Patch Kids were the stuff that Santa's stockings were filled with, meant every girl”.

7) *Pada: Sequences Tala Adi*

The students are not specifically taught any items as such. Based on this piece of evocative music they are asked to create their own sequences and stories with any two objects. The music composition for the item "Sequences", featuring percussion instruments only, was created by Ghatam S. Karthick.

8) *Pada: Meri Chitthi (Letter to Lord Nataraja)*

Raga–Kalavati *Tala* – Adi

Hindi: Dr. P. B. Sreenivasan.

9) *TillanaRaga –BehagTala – Adi*

Creating the Animal *Tillana*, *music by Arun*, Charanam in Tamil Dr. P. B. Sreenivos

Choreographic possibilities abound in this piece of evocative music in which the *charanam* is addressed to Lord Muruga. As the dancer enters the stage she marvels at the inhabitants of the animal kingdom that greet her one by one, starting with the peacock struts on to the stage in all its splendour with its plumes in full display, next he crocodile dances in search of a prey. The movements of the fish swimming in the water, darting across, swirling and turning in circles, the hissing snake, through the different postures it assumes while gliding, stretching and lifting its hood up in spurts, offers a variety in the use of Bharatanatyam movements done particularly close to the floor. Dancing Monkeys garnering all the mischievousness and jollity it can dance with and the deer with its leaps, bouncing around in all directions, reflects a gay abandon.

NAATYANJALI MARGAM by Shri V. P. Dhananjayan and Smt. Shanta Dhananjayan

The Naatyanjali *Margam* is a revolutionary new repertoire developed by the Dhananjayans, the renowned classical dancer-couple trained initially in Kalakshetra, Chennai. V P Dhananjayan is especially known for his revolutionary and questioning approach to tradition but who can work around it to still be respectful of the strength that tradition inherently has. To suit his theory, they renamed all the items of the *Margam*. *Alarippu* became *Naatyaanjali*, *Jattiswaram* became *Nrittaswaravali*, *Varnam* became *Nrutyopahaaram*, *Tillana* became *Nrittangahaaram*. The *Naatyanjali* is conceptualized to replace the *Alarippu/Kauthuvam*. Dhananjayan has brought together different *Mandalas*, *Padachari*, *Padabhedas* etc., used the five *taala* variations, creating a salutary piece that acknowledges various deities, using the simplest of movements, *hastas* and *mudras*. Naatyanjali was in Hindola *ragam* by Guru Elappa Pillai and was choreographed to include elements of *Alarippu*, *Jattiswaram* and *Shabdham*. *Nrutyopahaaram* (*Varnam*) was a Telugu piece by Turaiyur Rajgopal Sarma, a contemporary composer, on the lines of the *PadaVarnam*. Based on the childhood pranks of the baby Krishna, Dhananjayan based it on the elucidation of *Bhakti-bhava*. In the second half of the piece, Dhananjayan used the *chittaswaras* for a more expressive effect. *Nrutyopahaaram* was thus a unique composition and came in for much criticism as but the critics felt that Dhananjayan was doing *abhinaya* for *swaras*! Much of the criticism soon

became approval and other performers were emboldened to do new things in a similar vein. Dhananjayan explains, “In *Chinni Krishna raranannupalimpa* ... the story is of Krishna eating mud. The *chittaswaraa* is the prelude to that. I connected the story where Krishna is playing in the mud, and while playing, the play is shown as *swaras*. It is not *mukhaabhinaya*, but purely *angikaabhinaya* showing Krishna playing in the mud. At the end of it, when the words start, we do the *mudras*.” Such a *Varnam* was new to the audience. Over time though, this monumental *Varnam* is celebrated all over the world and dancers from other schools also perform it. This is followed by two *Padams* and then the *Nrittangahaaram* (*Tillana*). The new term actually describes the dance item much more accurately than does the term, *Tillana*, which has its basis in music. It is choreographed to an unusual composition by Balamurali Krishnan in Kuntalavarali. Very few dancers wanted to work with it but Dhananjayan took up the challenge and composed and performed it as a solo. His interpretation was much appreciated by Balamurali Krishnan as well. However, Dhananjayan’s efforts were criticized quite heavily, including by Kalakshetra, for moving away from established traditions, questioning the need for re-naming the items, and so on. However the move was catalytic in that it gave impetus to others not to shy away from experimentation and opened the doors to more imaginative ideation in Bharatanatyam.

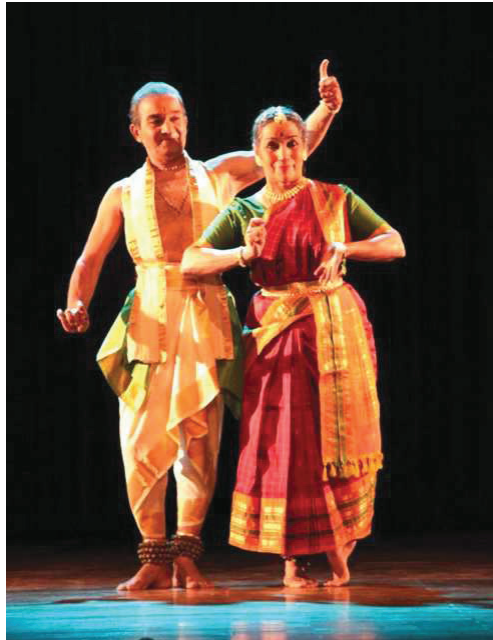


Fig.8 : Shri V.P Dhananjayan and Smt. Shanta Dhananjayan

1. *Naatyaaanjali*

Dhananjayan's invocatory number *Naatyaaanjali* took the place of *Alarippu* or *Kauthuvam*. It had a specific significance, not merely a philosophical one. Composed out of various *Mandalas*, *Padachari*, *Padabhedas* etc., and woven into the straits of the five *tala* (*Jaathi*) variations, exploiting the *anga-pratyanga-upangas*, it culminated in the invocation to various deities, thus introducing simple *hastas* and *mudras*. A student who is adept in this should be able to know all these theoretical aspects as realized in actual practice. This inaugural item in *Hindola ragam*, an item by Guru Elappa Pillai, done only by him and his students was the first solo dance choreography that Dhananjayan did. The title was novel, so was the item, combining the ingredients of *Alarippu*, *Jatiswaram* and *Shabdham* put together. Creative, but without deviating from the traditional format, this proved to be very appealing to the public. The Sanskrit word *Naatyaaanjali* is now a familiar one and to the Dhananjayans goes the credit of popularizing it as the name of an item.

2. *Nrutyopahaaram*

A *Varnam* is an offering of dance and mime. In place of the *Varnam*, the Dhananjayans introduced '*Nrutyopahaaram*'. *Varnam* is a musical term adapted to dance and it does not denote the component constituents of dance, *Nritta*, *Nritya* and *Natya* that make up such a central piece. The term *Nrityopahaaram* does. This Telugu *Varnam* was by TuraiyurRajagopalaSarma, a contemporary composer, which was unusual for that time. Moreover, this Telugu *Pada Varnam* on Krishna in Athana, Aditala, appears to be the only *Pada Varnam* in that raga and is a masterpiece of the Dhananjayans. It revels in the childhood pranks of Krishna with some Vishnu-leelas thrown in. Usually the Padams / Varnams are done in a *padarthabinayam*, *vakyabhinayam*. In those days the *sancharis* were not elaborate. It was usual then to depict only *nayakanayakibhavam* apart from compositions from the past. The uniqueness of this *Varnam* is, it is totally based on *bhakti bhavam*. Dhananjayan brought in a lot of story content, so within the format of the tradition, the story was enacted very effectively, so anyone from 8 to 80 could understand easily.

In the 2nd half of the *Varnam*, which was set in a pace different to the usual *Varnam*, Dhananjayan used the *chittaswaraas* to enact certain episodes, as an expressive

piece. *Nrutyopahaaram* was thus a unique composition but the critics opined that Dhananjayan was doing *abhinaya* for *swaras*! This criticism changed later to approval and not long after, other performers started to present their versions. This solo *Varnam* was thus unique in title as well as execution.

Such a presentation in Bharatanaatyam was new to the people. Some established dancers welcomed the idea though they themselves were not bold enough to deviate from set patterns. This monumental *Varnam* is celebrated all over the world even today, to the extent that dancers from other schools also perform it. Thus, *Nrityopahaaram* was a big trendsetter in the *Varnam* format.

3. *Padams*

After that came 2 new padams like Periasami Thooran's Ariyaparuvam.

4. *Nrittangahaaram*

The Dhananjayans replaced the *Tillana*, with *Nrittangahaaram*, which literally describes what is being done, which the term *Tillana*, being a musical term, did not. The choreography contains chains of rhythmic movements, some non-conventional, that is, demonstrably different from those generally seen in a *Tillana*. The music, of course, continues to be *Tillana*-like. This *Tillana* is choreographed to a composition by Balamuralikrishna in Kuntalavarali. The *Tillana* was different and more complicated than the usual format, so no dancers wanted to even attempt to dance for it. Dhananjayan took it up as a challenge, learnt the music directly from Balamurali and composed the dance for it. It was the first time someone had ventured to do the controversial *Tillana* of a controversial musician. When Balamurali saw the *Tillana*, he was in tears and remarked, "*Tillana* looks as if I have composed the music for your dance". This was done as a solo by Dhananjayan. "The traditionalists including my Alma Mater, heavily criticized it for deviating from known norms, and the reviews were mixed. The conservatives criticized it saying there is no *Alarippu*, no *Jatiswaram*, no *Tillana*, the names of items were new and so on. But a couple of years later, people started to themselves experiment."

NRITYA GANGA MARGAM a synthesis of Marathi language and Hindustani music, by dr. Sucheta Chapekar.

Dr. Sucheta Chapekar is a well-known dancer, teacher, researcher and choreographer and has played a major role in popularising Bharatanatyam in Maharashtra. Trained under Guru Acharya Parvatikumar who did phenomenal work researching contribution by the Tanjore Maratha rulers, Shahaji and Serfoji Bhosale, to the richness of Bharatanatyam, she has made invaluable contribution to the Bharatanatyam repertoire, presenting their compositions through her dance. Nriya Ganga is conceptualised as a cultural bridge between north and south India with the lyrical content in Marathi and the accompanying music being Hindustani classical.



Fig.9 : Dr. Sucheta Chapekar

The items, which she calls *kritis*, begin with the *Vandana*, an invocatory item in three ragas, choreographed to salute Lord Ganesha, the Guru and Lord Shiva. The next item is *Peshkar* that is danced to table *bols* in slow and medium tempo. *Saragam* follows, especially composed piece in praise of Goddess Saraswati, by vocalist Prabha Atre. It is danced to swara patterns and choreographed such that the *swara*

patterns take visual shape through *nritta* movements. The Ashtamanagala is *anritta* item divided into eight patterns saluting the presiding deities of the eight directions. This is followed by an *Abhinaya* item in two *Chota Khayals* where the first one depicts the *virahotkanthitanayika*'s suffering as she bears the pangs of unrequited love. In the second one, she assumes the mantle of the *khanditanayika*, angry and hurt with her lord who she has found out has betrayed her and loves another. The stress on *abhinaya*-based item continues with a Marathi *Natya Geet* (*Naahi mibolata*) from the popular musical, "*Maanapmaan*". Here the *nayika* is expressing her mock anger at her beloved's impertinent remark. This is followed by a *ShivaStuti* in the form of a *Kavitta*, a combination of lyrics in praise of Lord Shiva and table *bols*, with a *bandish* which is a vintage composition by vocalist Kumar Gandharva. The next item is a Hindi *Thumari* (*Mitwa mane nahi*) which features the confusion of a young woman of Vrundavana as she feels offended by the young Krishna teasing yet also feels charmed by him. A *Tarana* follows based on a *bandish* by Ustad Vilayat Husain Khan, choreographed as *anritta* item. The *Margam* end on a devotional note with a Marathi *Bhajan* (*Dhanya janma*) sung by a devotee whose glimpse of Shree Rama fills her with so much ecstasy that she dances in abandon, singing that her life is supremely blessed.

DEVANGANANRITYA MARGAM by Smt. Anjani Arunkumar



Veteran dancer-teacher Anjani Arunkumar is a highly creative performance artist. She has choreographed two exceedingly difficult but extremely interesting and exciting *Margams*. The Devangananrtya *Margam* takes the *bhakti*-based temple dance of north India accompanied by Hindustani music, and blends it with Bharatanatyam.

She created and worked on three different *margams*. The first *Margam* covers the poetic- pieces of various saints and vaggeyakaras, which is given in Devanagari script. The second *Margam* is based on the *Kirtanas- pustimargiya Padas-* of the great saintly poets and singers- Astachhapa and others Kirtankars. The Third *margam* is based on the Hindi songs of the great Padmanabha Bhakta, Maharaja Sri Swati Tirunal. (Fig.10 : Smt. Anjani Arunkumar)

Margam1 : Devanagari Script

Based on the poetic- pieces of a few great Saints and Vaggeyakaras.

No.	Kriti	Raga	Tala
1	<i>Ganesh Vandana</i>	<i>Hamsadhwani</i>	<i>Tritala</i>
2	<i>Nataraja Stuti</i>	<i>Hamsadhwani</i>	<i>Patatala</i>
3	<i>Sloka in praise of goddess Saraswati</i>	<i>Misra kalavati</i>	<i>No Rhythm</i>
4	<i>Mangalapushpa Recitation</i>	-----	<i>Gauri</i>
5	<i>Swaramalika</i>	<i>Mishra Desha</i>	<i>Tevra</i>
6	<i>Yashogita</i>	<i>Khamaj, Kafi, Jhinjhoti</i>	<i>Tevra</i>
7	<i>Varna- Drupada</i>	<i>Darbari Kanada</i>	<i>Chautala</i>
8	<i>Shiva Kirtana</i>	<i>Durga</i>	<i>Mahesh</i>
9	<i>Jhula Chaturanga</i>	<i>Brindabanisaranga</i>	<i>Tritala</i>
10	<i>Sri Ramakathakirtana</i>	<i>Traditional Chupali Tune : Mishra jayajayavanti</i>	<i>Patatala</i>
11	<i>Ashtapadi</i>	<i>Mishra Desha. Jayajayavanti</i>	<i>Patatala</i>
12	<i>Mira Bhajan</i>	<i>Based on Jogkaunsa</i>	<i>No rhythm</i>

13	<i>Tarana - Trivata</i>	<i>Bhupa</i>	<i>Tritala</i>
14	<i>Mangalam Madhurashtakam</i>	<i>Bhairavi</i>	<i>Patatala</i>
15	<i>Sri Ramamangalam</i>	<i>Bhairavi</i>	<i>Patatala</i>

Margam 2 Based on HAVELI SANGEETAs a part of worship in Sri Krishna temples

No.	<i>Kriti</i>	<i>Raga</i>	<i>Tala</i>
1	<i>Mangalacharnam</i>	<i>Bhairava</i>	-----
2	<i>Yamuna Stuti</i>	<i>Ramakali</i>	<i>Jhapatala</i>
3	<i>Jagayave- ka- Pada</i>	<i>Desakara</i>	<i>No Rhythm</i>
4	<i>Mangala-Arati</i>	<i>MangalaBhairava</i>	<i>Tritala</i>
5	<i>Mangalapushpa</i>	<i>Recitation</i>	<i>Ashtamangala</i>
6	<i>Svaramalika</i>	<i>Ragamalika</i>	<i>Dhamara</i>
7	<i>Vasanta-Dhamara</i>	<i>Basanta</i>	<i>Dhamara</i>
8	<i>Varna-Drupada</i>	<i>Ragamalika</i>	<i>Tritala</i>
9	<i>Rasalila Kirtana</i>	<i>Kalyana</i>	<i>Chautala</i>
10	<i>Jogiyaki Najara</i>	<i>Jogiya</i>	<i>Dhumali</i>
11	<i>Murali-ka-pada</i>	<i>Misra Khamaj</i>	<i>No Rhythm</i>
12	<i>Candaprastava-ka-pada</i>	<i>Bageshri</i>	<i>Tritala</i>
13	<i>Trivata</i>	<i>Sohani</i>	<i>Sripati</i>
14	<i>Podhave-ka-pada</i>	<i>Based on Abhogi</i>	<i>Rupaka</i>
15	<i>Mangalam: Ashraya-ka-pada</i>	<i>Bihaga</i>	<i>Tritala</i>

Margama 3

Based on the HINDI SONGS OF MAHARAJA SRI SWATI TIRUNAL **Notations in Hindustani Ragas & Talas: By Dr. Ratanjankar**

No.	<i>Kriti</i>	<i>Raga</i>	<i>Tala</i>
1	<i>Bhagavata Stuti</i>	<i>Gauri</i>	<i>Tritala</i>
2	<i>Mangalapushpa</i>	<i>Recitation</i>	<i>Sudipa</i>
3	<i>Svaramalika</i>	<i>Hindola</i>	<i>Abhinava</i>
4	<i>Varna drupada</i>	<i>Bibhasa</i>	<i>Cautala</i>
5	<i>Chaturana</i>	<i>Ragamalika</i>	<i>Cautala/Ekatala</i>
6	<i>Bhajana</i>	<i>Khamaj</i>	<i>Dadara</i>
7	<i>Bhajana</i>	<i>Sohani</i>	<i>Rupaka</i>
8	<i>Tarana-Trivata</i>	<i>Bhinnashadaja</i>	<i>Chautala/ Ekatala</i>
9	<i>Hindi Tillana</i>	<i>Dhanasri/ Bhimpalasi</i>	<i>Adi/Tritala</i>
10	<i>Mangalam</i>	<i>Sindhubhairavi</i>	<i>Kharava</i>

MARGAM on Hindi Songs of Maharaja Sri Swati Tirunal

1)**Ganeshvandana (Kriti):** It is sung before the curtain opens, or before the dancer enters on the stage. The dancer enters, bows down to god, installed on the stage, she also bows down to the guru musicians and then she does her namaskara through dance.

2)**Bhagavat Stuti:** The Dance forms Kautvam and Kirtanam are kept in mind in this item, along with the basic musical composition, there is a blending of various rhythm patterns, small swara petterns and words which create temple atmosphere. The dance form is rather Kautvam- Kirtanam, as there is a complete musical composition of poetic piece used in this item. Two such stuties are given stuti of goddess Yamuna in Second *margam* and shiva stuti in Third*margam*.

3) **Mangalapushpa (Alarippu)**: The Framework of this dance form is that of Alarippu. But the slow, medium and fast tempos are not exactly double of the former tempo. In first speed, two varieties are recited instead of one. Mangalapushpa has also been attempted in the rhythm cycle of $7\frac{1}{2}$ beats.

4) **Svaramalika (Jatisvaram)**: The dance choreography follows the framework of jatisvaram. It is composed in a single raga or in a combination of two or more ragas. Pakhavaja based talas like Dhamarand Tevra are chosen. Rhythm cycle of $12\frac{1}{2}$ beats is also used in one of the svaramalika

5) **Varna Dhrupada (Varnam)**: Here the dance form of *Varnam* and the musical form of Dhrupada are blended. We shall go through the ganakrama of Dhrupada form, the Krama (order) of the dance form of *Varnam*. The Krama that is the order of the first half of the Varna-Dhrupada is similar to that done in a regular Varnam, except most of the Tihai-s are Chakradhar to complete the rhythm cycles.

For the Uttaranga or the second half of this item, caranam or upa-pallavi is not there. But a typical variety which is known as Bolatana is worked out along with its solfa reproduction, saragamatana, The Bolatana is so called because the same line of the Sahitya or poetic piece is developed by means of slow tanas, blended with fluent rhythmic patterns. These Saragamatanas and Bolatanas are worked out for all the four sections viz, Sthayi, Antara, Sancara and Abhoga.

The Bolatanas and their solfa reproduction Saragamatanas bring out very important characteristic of Dhrupada form and at the same time, the dance composition of the svaras and sahitya can be very nicely blended, as the Bolatanas and Saragamatanas have fluent rhythmic patterns and they happen to be very similar to the svaras and sahityas of the *Varnam*. Nrta patterns are danced on the Saragamatanas and tattimette steps are done: along with the suitable hand gestures, on the Bolatanas.

An important point may be noted here. Generally, rhythm patterns of the dance form *Varnam*, ends before the sama or the first beat. Whereas, a rhythm pattern or Bolatanas and Saragamatanas end on the sama. To enjoy the layakari or the rhythmic beauty of both, the Nrta pattern on the saragamatana ends with a Tihai before the sama, whereas in the musical pattern of saragamatana, svaras are sung,

but the saragamatana ends, by using the last phrase of the tallying Bolatana, on the sama. In the same way, Tattime^u patterns, which are done with suitable hand gestures on Bolatana, end before the sama and the Bolatana patterns end on the sama.

In the Uttara-riga, the music of these Tihais, is especially composed & it is named as "Bolatana, for uttarariga arudhi" for Sthayi, Antara sahcari & Abhoga. Finally, a *Varnam* ends with a catchy tune which consists of one rhythm-cycle and which conveys the typical form (svarupa) of the raga of *Varnam*. On this line, which is sung through the svaras, a few dance patterns are done. They consist of faster footwork. The line is repeated many times and the dance patterns gradually give more complicated and faster footwork and the climax is reached.

5) **Chaturanga**: Chatuh means 4, and ranga means colour. Caturanga is a combination of four varieties of ranga colour. Sahitya, words of Tarana, Svaras and Pataksaras (words of percussion—Pakhavaja: Mrdangam in this composition). This is a Jhula, written by Mirabai in Chaturanga form. It is rather a Jhula-Chaturanga and one chaturanga in the third *margam*.

6) **Rasalili Kirtana (Bhajana)**: Temple Dhrupada: This item typically represents Haveli Sangita, The poetic-piece is written by one of the great Astachhapa Kavi—Krsnadasa. The dance musical form is worked out in the same way as it is sung in the Havelis. Each stanza begins with a small *Tihai (Arudhi)*. *Sthayibhava* is performed on the first stanza. Then this is rendered in *Duguna* (double speed). For the second, stanza'after the *Sthayibhava*, the rendering is done in the combination $1\frac{1}{2}$ (*Dedhilaya*) times of the basic lava and *Duguna*. After this stanza, there is a *svara* pattern. In the third stanza after the *Sthayibhava*, the stanza is sung in the combination of $1\frac{1}{2}$ *laya* and *Tiguna* (three times) *laya*. In the fourth and last stanza, after the *Sthayibhava*, the stanza is rendered in *Duguna* and *Tiguna* lay as.

It is a typical characteristic of a *kirtana* of Haveli Sangita. These rhythm patterns are danced with *Tattimettu* steps or other simple steps and they are synchronised with harmonious *hasta-mudras* according to the words of the *kirtana*. There is. *atirmanam* after the last stanza and the item ends with a *swara* pattern. A few *rasalila* movements are performed on this pattern.

7) **Bhajanas:** Convey delicate sentiments through *Madhura Bhakti* or *PremlaksanaBhakti.Astapadi* or *Bhajana* can also be performed by an artist who sings and dances herself.' In "*Samgitaratnakara*" there is a definition of '*Gaundali*' (dancer).

8) **Tarana-Trivata:** It is a beautiful combination of the two musical forms, viz. *Tarana* and *Trivata*. It is worked out as a dance musical form for the dance form of *Tillana*. *Mei" adavus* are performed on the first line-*Sthayi*-of the composition. Then the *Korvais* dance patterns are done on the "rhythm patterns, which are sung by way of *Sthayi-prastara*. *Tarana* words as well as *trivata* words are used for the rhythm patterns. The first *h'ne*—*Sthayi*—ends with *periyadavu*.

In these *tarana-trivata*, the *pataksaras* are mainly based on *Pakhavaja*, to blend well with the dance form *Tillana*, the rhythm of which is played on *Mrdangam*. There is a pleasing *jugalabandhi* between the singer and the musician. The dance patterns synchronize beautifully, without disturbing the style of Bharatanatyam. As the dance form choreography takes up the framework of *Tillana*,

9) **Tillana (Hindi)** This item is supported by *Mrdangam* and *Pakhavaja*, Dance patterns are played on the *Mrdangam* and *Pakhavaja* is played between the dance patterns. Two *Taranas-Trivatas* are given. In part II Maharaja" Sri Swati Tirunal has composed a Hindi *Tillana* in *Dhanasri*" raga and *Aditala*, which is included in the repertoire-*margam* based on the Maharaja's Hindi songs.

10) **Mangalam:** It is a short prayer seeking the welfare of the people. The recital ends with a *Mangalam*.

FIREFLIES MARGAM BY SMT. MALVIKA SARUKAI



Fig.11 : Smt. Malavika Sarukkai

1)**Awakening:** *Ragas-* Kalyani, Sindhubhairavi *Tala-* Adi

Music composer - Seetarama Sarma

She awakens. Fireflies beckon like undiscovered stars showing themselves.

Rejoicing, She rises to the play of sudden rain, and dances... Desire fills her.

2)**Padam- Expectation-**Idene Sakhi

*Raga-*Behag *Tala-* Adi

In eagerness she waits for her beloved in her decorated bed chamber. Her passion grows with every act of enhancement of her physical beauty. The surge of expectation turns into the wake of disappointment, but once again becomes the wave of expectation.

3)**Padam -Fear:-** Nidiraiyil Lyric & Music composer Ganam Krishna Iyer

Raga- Pantuvarali *Tala-* Adi

She has had a restless night. To her *sakhi* she speaks of an ancient fear. She says," Last night, in my dream, I saw my beloved with someone else. I do not know who she was. But I am haunted by images of them together and I am in torment."

4) ***Loneliness***: Lyric- Prasade from Amarusatakam Music composer Meera Seshadri

Raga- Hamsanadam, *Tala*- Misra Chapu

In separation from her, he is anguished. In intense longing, he says, "Wherever I look, whichever way I turn, I see her, and her alone. Everything becomes her, and nothing else is of importance. I long for her only her."

5) ***Seeking*** : Music composed by - Prema Ramamoorthy

Raga- Tilang *Tala*- Adi

Apprehensively, she sets out to meet her beloved on a stormy night, under the cover of darkness, carrying a lantern of fireflies, lost in the forest and in herself. Until, as sudden as a wayward breeze, she release the fireflies trapped in the lantern... As they fly free, she follow them and the darkness dissolves.

She says," I have shed my fear, why should i care what people say. Let them gossip. They cannot cloak me, nor will I conceal my love. I am like the bird which flies free. And they... are envious. Let them gossip. I will not care."

Padam - Yarukkagilum Bhayama

Raga - Begada

Tala- Misra Chapu

Lyric and music composed by Madhura Kavi Bharati

6) ***Meeting***: Music composer Seetarama Sarma

Raga- Purvikalyani *Tala*- Adi

Manmatha is everywhere. The moment is charged Love envelops the lovers, holds them in its embrace. Tenderness and passion flow between them and they are consumed by love. The sequence is explored through pure dance.

7) ***Loss***: Lyric- Gathe Prema from Amarusatakam

Music composer Prema Ramamoorthy

Ragas- Hamirkalyani, Varali *Tala*- Misra Chapu

The relationship is now spent. She says to her sakhi," The bonds of love that held us together have come apart. Fillings of affection and tenderness have receded. And he now walks past me like a stranger." Recalling the past, she laments," What we had together is lost. Why does my heart not accept this?"

8) **Padam Anger**– Idaivida Lyric and Music composer Subbarama Iyre.

Raga – Saveri *Tala* - Roopaka

Seeming remorseful, he arrives at dawn, the night long past. She confronts him. Accusing him she says," I can see you have been with someone else. I can see the evidence on you, the smeared kaajal from her eyes is proof, as is her Lingering perfume, and this, one strand of her beautiful hair. No longer will I be taken in by your clever words. Leave me now. The door is right here.

9) **Resurgence**

Ragas- Sumanisaranjini, Hamsadhvani *Tala*- Adi

Wishing to be free from the cycle of emotions, she withdraws into herself. In this womb she thinks, and realises, "Alone there is no delight." Once again she braves the whirlpool of emotions. Like surging waters, her desire rises and swells. Like lotuses opening, like fragrance flowing.

10) **Celebration** Lyric and music composer Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar

Raga- poornachandrika *Tala* - Adi

The *Tillana* uses the ' recurrent motif of the swing'. As an expression of the rush of vitality, as abandonment to joy.

GUJARATI MARGAM BY SMT. ANJALI MERH

As we saw earlier in this chapter, many artists, all over India, have successfully proven the integration of Bharatanatyam technique with North Indian Music and regional language. Way back in 1972, then Head of the Dance Department of the M. S. University of Baroda, late Smt. Anjali Merh, wrote composed and choreographed a whole Margam in Gujarati which a few have successfully performed. Smt. Merh studied Bharatanatyam under Smt. Rukmini



Arundel at Kalakshetra in around 1941 to 1946-7. One of the first Kalakshetrian of which she was very proud. Keeping the format of each composition of the Margam, She strictly adhered to the poetic meters, structure of Tata-S and Raga-S

Fig.12 : Smt. Anjali Merh

MelapraptiRagam: Nattai, Talam: Khanda Eka

Melaprapti is an invocatory item of pure dance or Nritta. Generally, Melaprapti is an item of rhythmic syllables played on Mridangam before the beginning of any dance or music recital. Smt. Anjali Merh composed this item, as an innovation, dance movements set on those syllables.

Allaripu: Nattai, Chatushra Tishra

Jatiswaram: Ragamalika, Mishra chapu

Yashogiti (*Shabdam*) Lyrics by Dayaram

કાનુડો કામણગારો રે ઓ બેની આતો (*KanudoKaman garo re o beni aato*)

Ragam - Kafi

Talam - Mishra chapu

Well-known known *Kriti* of Dayaram, the famous poet of Gujarat, '*Kanudokamanugaro re o beni aato*'. Dayaram's famous *Padawas* used as the *Shabdam*. but Anjaliben called it *Yashogiti*. It was a small composite and simple item. In there is just an introduction to *abhinaya*. Dayaram was known for his Prem Lakshana Bhakti, which so well fitted Bharatanatyam format. And that too in 7 beats

tala cycle, as used traditionally in the Shabdham. And Anjaliben could really and easily bring out the early emotions of love and tease in that.

Varnam: Lyrics and Music composer Smt Anjali Merh

Ragam Vasanta Talam: Adi

Anjaliben knew the structure of the Varnam, that is the Pallavi, Anupallavi, Cittaswara and Sahitya, Charnam, Yathukadaes, and their Sahitya. She had extensive knowledge of both Carnatic and North Indian music as well as good command of Gujarati language and its metres. So she wrote the Varnam in Gujarati. The grace, lyricism, sensuality and love of Dhirlalit Krishna “Shyam”, so dear and inseparable from Gujarati-S was wonderfully explored

Pallavi

ક્યાં ગયો કૃષ્ણ મુરારી સખી (*Kya Gayo Krishna Murari Sakhi,*)

દિવસ ને રજની પથ હું નીરખતી (*Divas ne rajani path hu nirakhati*)

This Varnam depicts Virahotkanthita Nayika. It is the agony of a devotee separated from the Lord Krishna. The Nayika is awaiting the arrival for the Lord, but on account of his preoccupation with other engagements, he does not come and makes her afflicted with anxiety and distress due to the separation.

Padam: Khandita Nayika Lyrics and Music Composer Smt Anjali Merh

જા કાના તુજ કરણી જણી (*Ja Kana tuj karni jani*)

નથી રે સુણવી જુઠી વાણી (*nathi re sunavi juthi vani*)

Ragam Arabhi/Durga, Talam Adi

Smt Anjali Merh wrote Ashtanayika in Gujarati for performing as any padam.

Kirtam: Lyrics and Music composer- Smt Anjali Merh

Ragam: Shriranjani, Talam Adi

પ્રણમું પ્રતિદિન હે નટરાજ (*Pranamu pratidin he natarajan,*)

Kirtanam has its own *shollus* to be danced with a lot of *Nritta* and *Nritya*. The story of *Anand Tandav* was written, composed and choreographed by the real devotee and *bhakta* of Shiva.

Tillana Lyrics and Music composer- Smt Anjali Merh

Ragam Sindubhairavi Talam Adi

She was one of the biggest *bhakta* of her guru Smt. Rukminidevi Arundel so she created and wrote the *sahitya* of Tillana dedicating to her guru.

'Divyangi mruduaangi Samarunita, kaladayini.sukhshanti de jagahit ,

દિવ્યાંગી મુદુઆંગી સમરું નિત, કલા દાયિની સુખશાંતિ દે જગ હિત,

jagat janani soma nartan darshini, Rukmini Namu hu Anjali Kar Dhari.'

જગત જનની સમ નર્તનદર્શિની, રુક્મિણી નમું : અંજલી કર ધરી.

Shlokam Ek shloki Ramayana **आदो राम तपोवनादी गमनम्** "Aado Rama Tapovanadi Gamanam"

This is the whole *Margam* in Gujarati. For this *Margam*, for the first time Anjalibend designed the appropriate Bharatanatyam costume using Bandhani Saree with front *Pallu* and no *Mellaka*. Even the costume was taken care of to establish Gujarati People and its culture identity.

There are a number of artists and choreographers who have created various Bharatanatyam *Margamkritis* in different languages and with different themes. Mostly they have used the regional or poetry of known poets in the form of pada, Kirtana and such. But for Varnam it is very tough job as to be called a Varnam, one has to adhere to the specific structure, musicality and definite format. Without this, it is not Varnam. Someone who has deep knowledge of all aspects of music, command on the poetics of the language and knows Bharatanatyam very well that can try to create an original *Margam* in its proper format.

Meeting a number of Gurus and experts during this research I realised the tremendous amount of creativity all around me in the field of Bharatanatyam. Even

for this one topic of different languages and themes used in the creation of Margams, I have come across many more. Some have utilised their creativity to reach to the students, to the connoisseurs, to establish their cultural identity, expand the horizons and to understand the dance style better. I am definitely indebted to all these Gurus who showed and shared their work with me and for opening this vast art form and its nuances to me.

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