

LAYA GANA NRITHYA MADHURA LAHIRI

This one of a kind programme is the brainchild of *Sh. T R Dhandapany*, a leading percussionist of this country. A renowned exponent of Talavadhyam, he is perceived as one of the firsts who brought the otherwise 'secondary' percussion instruments to the centre stage. He conceived this concept of amalgamating vocals, melodic instruments, percussion instruments and dance forms into one concert where equal importance is given to all the aspects. Vocalists of both *Carnatic* and *Hindustani* genre with different melodic instruments like *Violin, Flute, Keyboard* will form the melodic support. Seven different percussion instrumentalists on *Mridangam, Kanjira, Pakhawaj, Ghatam, Dholak, Morsing, Tabla* will build the rhythmic sphere. Two different classical dance forms *Bharathnatyam* and *Kathak* will provide the visual display of the nuances generated by different sounds. A total of 14 artistes will form the different pillars of the concert.

Talavadhyam – The Basic Structure

Each *Talavadya Programme* is set to a tala, for e.g. *Adhi*, a tala of eight beats/Aksharam. The performance begins with all the instruments playing together to reach a crescendo followed by a musical piece set to the same tala performed by vocalists and melodic instrumentalists. Once the melody is over, all the instruments start the solo rounds one after another. Each of the instruments perform solo for around two to three minutes each, where each instrument tries to produce as many variations as possible during their time. *This would be a unique concert as dancers will also take turns in the Talavadya rounds. They will perform their jathis in different nadais.*

The first round is based on the *Chatusra gathi*, which is the normal base. In the second round, the nature is *Tisara*, similar to *Waltz*, where the artistes will bring 3 beats into 4. Following it would be the most dynamic nadai of all, and the least applied of all as well, the *Sankeerna Nadai*, i.e., putting 9 ball into a bag for 4. The next round takes place in *Kanda Nadai* i.e., bringing 5 beats in a unit time, and then, the last one is the *Misra Nadai*, i.e., seven beats in a unit time.

Some more rounds follow these rounds, where each succeeding round is shorter than the preceding one. At one point, the rounds would reach the level of the smallest factor of the tala where no further shortening would be possible leading to coalesce of all the instruments for the finale. The finale starts with the instruments playing common compositions with ever increasing speed to reach a magnificent crescendo.

In the end, a *Korvai* preceded by a *Mohra* is played to announce the end. The *Korvai* is the last piece of the talavadya as well as the Solo rounds. In short, the performance tries to bring out the different aspects of the instruments used and display the versatility with which they are endowed.

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Compositions

1. Hamsadhwani

Tala: **Kanda Chapu** (2½ Aksharam)

Composer: **Sh. T R Dhandapany, Sh. D. Venkatasubramanian**

Description: A Musical piece, in the Raga **Hamsadhwani** will be performed by the melodic arrangement supported by various percussion instruments. Different levels of **Tisaram** will be displayed in the musical piece ending with a *Mohra*. Once the musical piece is over, percussionists will perform their solo pieces in **Chatusra** and **Tisara** Nadais. **Sankeerna nadai** will also be played in this tala by the percussionist. A rare attempt, not usually a part of stage programmes, due to its complexities. The length of the avartanam will be continually reducing, reaching an interjection of all the instruments.

2. Malhaar

Tala: **Chatusra jathi Tirupada** (8 Aksharam – Adhi Tala)

Composer: **Sh. T R Dhandapany, Sh. D. Venkatasubramanian**

Description: A Musical piece in the Raga **Malhaar** will be played by the melodic instrumentalists supported by various percussion instruments. Dancers performing **Baratanatyam** and **Kathak** will join to portray vibrancies and colours of monsoon, like **swings** and **peacock dancing**. Percussionist will produce sounds of **precipitation** and **thunders** signifying the arrival of Rain. Near the end of the musical piece, a grand **korvai** will be performed by all the instrumentalists and dancers. Once the musical piece is over, percussionists will perform their solo pieces in **Chatusra** and **Kanda Nadai**. Dancers will act as a part of the percussion group and will perform jathis on different nadais. Once all the nadais are played, the length of solo will shorten to 1 aksharam each, leading to conjunction of all the various instruments together. A **mohra** and **korvai** will conclude this composition.

3. Kalyani

Tala: **Chatusra jathi Tirupada** (8 Aksharam – Adhi Tala)

Composer: **Sh. K. M. Vaidhyathan, Sh. T. R. Dhandapany**

Description: A Musical piece in the Raga **Kalyani** will be performed by the vocalists and the melodic instrumentalists supported by various percussion instruments. Dancers performing **Baratanatyam** and **Kathak** will join to display various **mohras** and **Korvais**. All the three forms Melodic, Percussion and Dance will perform in Sync with equal intensity.

4. Desh

Tala: **Sankeerna jathi Dhurva**(29 Aksharam)

Composer: **Sh. T R Dhandapany, Sh. D. Venkatasubramanian**

Description: **Sankeerna Dhurvam** is the largest tala of the 35 talas. A total of 29 beats, it takes to reach back to **Sammam**. As the length is a prime number, it is seemingly very hard to rationalize into smaller chunks to build an avartanam. Due to this mathematical toughness (not exactly a limitation), the tala is rarely performed on stage due to high possibility of mistakes, resulting in fillers to reach

the **sammam**. Thus, it was very difficult to compose a piece in this tala, but it was taken as a challenge.

The piece is based on the **Desh** Ragam. This will be performed by the melodic and the percussion instruments. Many new **Korvais** and **Mohras** will be presented during this composition.

5. Thilana – Chandrakauns

Tala: **Chatusra jathi Tirupada** (8 Aksharam – Adhi Tala)

Composer: **Sh. D. Venkatasubramanian**

Description: Thilana is based on the ragam **Chandrakauns**. This will be performed by the vocalists and the instrumentalist along-with the dancers. The item is mainly composed for the dancers. This will provide a soothing finish to the whole concert. A small piece of **Sahithyam** dedicated to lord **Murugan** is also sung at the end of the thilana.

Performing Artistes

Artist	Instrument / Role
PERCUSSION / RYTHM	
T. R. Dhandapany	Mridangam / Lead
Pt. Subhash Nirwan	Tabla
D. Kartik Narayanan	Mridangam
R. Krishnan	Morsingh
P. V. Raghavasimhan	Ghatam
P. Badrinayanan	Dholak
R. Ramkumar	Pakhawaz
Aditya Krishnan	Ganjira / Keyboard
MELODY	
Vasudevan	Carnatic Vocal
Sudhanshu Sharma	Hindustani Vocal
D. Venkatasubramanian	Violin
Anirudh Bharadwaj	Flute
DANCER	
Renuka Iyer	Bharatnatyam
Minhaz	Kathak

T.R.Dhandapany – Bio Data

Shri. **T.R.Dhandapany** took his initial training in the art of mridangam from Sikkal Shri A.S. Natesa Iyer. Later, he specialized under the tutelage of Late Shri. Harihara Sharma, Principal of Jaya Ganesh Talavadya Vidyalaya of Chennai & Late Shri. K.M.Vaidyanathan. He has been performing for the last five decades and has accompanied many top ranking musicians.

As percussion instruments were always used as accompaniments, Shri. Dhandapany took the initiatives and started full time **talavadya programmes** to bring percussionists to the center stage. Getting an excellent response, he was actuated to ameliorate on it by adding music to these programmes 'and titled it '**Laya Gana Madhura Lahiri**' in **1982**. Since then he has given more than 350 of these performances at cultural events organized by many esteemed organizations like **Sanskriti, Government of India, Rotary Club of India and I.C.C.R, Rashtrapati Bhawan**. He also participated in **First South Asian Festival** held in **Dhaka** in the year **1997**. He also gave these performances at various places in **Nepal** during the year **2006**, and featured at the **5th Annual Kathmandu Jazz Festival in Kathmandu**.

He also went on a **Europe** tour in the year **1999** along with his disciples for **Talavadya Programmes** to be included in the **Re-Orient festival**, which is a yearly cultural feature and received a mass acclaim from the European audience as well.

He was awarded the title of “**Mridanga Kovida**” by the **Asthika Samaj, New Delhi** for his contribution to art of percussion instruments in the year **2007**.

In **2001**, a new programme titled “**Laya Gana Nritya Madhura Lahiri**” was started, which included Classical Dances also as part of the performance, with Music and Percussion instruments. It was featured at the **Asia Pacific Week**, held in **Berlin** in **September of 2003**. The group led by him, also performed at numerous other places in **Germany and Austria**, where the group was received exceptionally well. In **2010**, the group performed at various places throughout **China** as part of the **Festival of India, in China**.

Shri. Dhandapany has trained various students in the art of **Mridangam, Ghatam, Kanjira, Morsing, Dholak, and Pakhawaj** some of whom are established performing artists. He is also of the most respected percussion teachers of the capital.

His meticulous mathematical calculations, in setting the 'sollukatus' 'korvais' etc., along with a **unique penchant** for providing the audiences with **enjoyable concepts**, earned him **commendable**

respect amongst the musicians, audience, and the critics alike in the form of numerous press reports and excellent audience response. He was invited to give **lecture demonstration** on the art of "**Mridangam playing**" at the prestigious **Musee Guimett de Paris**. He also performed **Talavadya Katcheri in Paris** with his **local disciples** for which he was highly appreciated. He has extensively toured entire **Europe, South East Asia, Australia, U.S.S.R., Latin America, Gulf** and almost all over the world.

Pt. Subhash Nirwan - Tabla

Pt. Subhash Nirwan, world renowned "Chaumukha" Tabla Vadaak is the leading Tabla Maestro of Delhi Gharana. Subhash Nirwan, born in a musician's family of Delhi Gharana, started learning tabla from his Father Sh. Motilal and his uncle Late Sh. Chaman Lal. A little later when he was seven years old, his grandfather late Pandit Gopal Das Nirwan, accepted him as his student for advanced training.

Subhash Nirwan has played all over India in almost all major music and dance festivals where he played solo as well as accompanied great artistes of India including instrumentalists, dancers and vocalists like Pt. Ravi Shankar, Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, Pt. Birju Maharaj, Pt. Jasraj to name a few.

Sh. D.Kartik Narayanan - Mridangam

D.Kartik Narayanan, took his training from his father, Sh. T.R.Dhandapany. A scholarship recipient from CCRT, India, he received the Child Prodigy award from Ananda Vikatan magazine at the age of five.

He has represented India at Asia Pacific Wochen, in Berlin, Jazzmandu festival in Nepal, other places in Europe. He also accompanied the group at the Festival of India in China. He also leads a young group featuring his father's disciples for various talavadhya programmes for esteemed organizations.

Sh. R.Krishnan - Morsing

He is one of the senior disciples of Sh. T.R.Dhandapany. He has been trained in the art of Mridangam and Morsing. He mastered the art of Morsing in a very short time.

He has accompanied Sh. T.R.Dhandapany in many talavadhya concerts in India and abroad. His performances have been highly acclaimed by music critics. He has accompanied both renowned vocalists and instrumentalists.

Sh. P.V.Raghavasimhan - Ghatam

P.V.Raghavasimhan has learnt the art of Ghatam from Sh. T.R.Dhandapany for more than 8 years. He has performed with the group in India and other parts of the world. He has been praised by famous music critics like P.V.Subramaniam (Subbudu) and others. He was also a recipient of All-India scholarship from CCRT. His command over the instrument has been lauded by critics.

Sh. P.Badrinarayanan - Dholak

P.Badrinarayanan is one of the senior disciples of Sh. T.R.Dhandapany. He has received training in the art of Mridangam for more than 10 years. He has performed in the talavadhya concerts in India and other parts of the world. He is one of the brilliant students of Sh. T.R.Dhandapany and has good knowledge of the mathematics involved required in this field. He has accompanied many leading musicians of the country.

R.Ramkumar - Pakhawaz

R.Ramkumar is one of the senior disciples of Sh. T.R.Dhandapany and been trained in the art of Mridangam for more than 7 years. He has performed in numerous talavadhya concerts at various places within India. Now, he is in Chennai and currently training in mridangam from Sh. Umayalapuram K.Sivaraman. He has accompanied various renowned carnatic musicians in Chennai and is one of the upcoming percussionists in Chennai.

Aditya Krishnan – Kanjira and Keyboard

Aditya Krishnan is a young upcoming artist who has been learning the Mridangam and the Kanjira under the tutelage of Guru Sh. T.R.Dhandapany for the past 10 years. He has also been learning Carnatic music from his grandfather Brahmasri G.S.Viswanatha Bhagavathar for the past 9 years and plays the Harmonium / Keyboard.

S.Vasudevan – Carnatic Vocals and Nattuvangam

S.Vasudevan is a classical vocalist and Bharatnatyam dancer. He learnt carnatic music from Madurai Shri Ramabhadran for several years and continues to receive advanced training from Prof. Radha Venkatachalam. Currently Vasudevan is pursuing his Ph.D in music from Delhi University. Vasudevan performs solo music and dance recitals. He also accompanies South Indian classical dancers with his singing and by playing nattuvangam, within India and abroad.

Sudhanshu Sharma – Hindustani Vocalist and Parhant

Sudhanshu Sharma was born in a family of traditional Pakhawaj and Tabla players. He received his initial training in Hindustani Vocal Music in Assam from Shri L. Choudhury, and later under Pandit Baldev Raj Verma, of the Indore Gharana. He has done his M.Phil Degree and pursuing his Phd. in Music from University of Delhi. He is a recipient of Smt. V. Bani Bai Ram Memorial Medal and Tushar Pandit Memorial Medal for Top Performers at the Masters Degree Examination of Delhi University.

D Venkatasubramanian – Violin and Music Composition

D.Venkatasubramanian, took his training from Late Sh. V Janakiraman, and Sh. VSK Chakrapani. He took advanced training from Smt. Akhila Krishnan, and Smt. Anusha. A recipient of scholarship from CCRT, he has given numerous Solo performances for various esteemed organizations. He has represented India at Asia Pacific Wochen, in Berlin, Jazzmandu festival in Nepal, and in Europe and at the Festival of India in China.

Sh. Anirudh Bharadwaj - Flute

Anirudh Bharadwaj is an upcoming flautist in New Delhi. He has been learning flute (Carnatic) from Smt. Akhila Krishnan for the past 14 years and has played at various places, and has received rave reviews. He has also started learning the Hindustani music from Sh. Kailash Sharma.

Renuka Iyer - Bharatanatyam

Renuka Iyer is an exponent of Bharatnatyam dancing. She has been learning Bharatnatyam under Guru Smt. Kanaka Sudhakar for 16 years, since the age of five. She has performed all over the world in places like Spain, Portugal, France, and Madeira Island etc. She also performed at the opening ceremony of the Commonwealth Games held in New Delhi in 2010. She is a M.A. in Bharatnatyam (Alankar), from Gandharva Maha Vidhyalaya.

Minhaz - Kathak

Minhaz has learnt the art of Kathak for many years and is a student of Sh. Rabindra Bengali and Kathak Kendra, New Delhi, and is a young and upcoming kathak dancer, of the capital. He has given numerous performances for esteemed organizations all over the country, in various dance festivals.