

INDIAN CONSERVATORY OF PARIS



L'Inde Éternelle



Eternal India



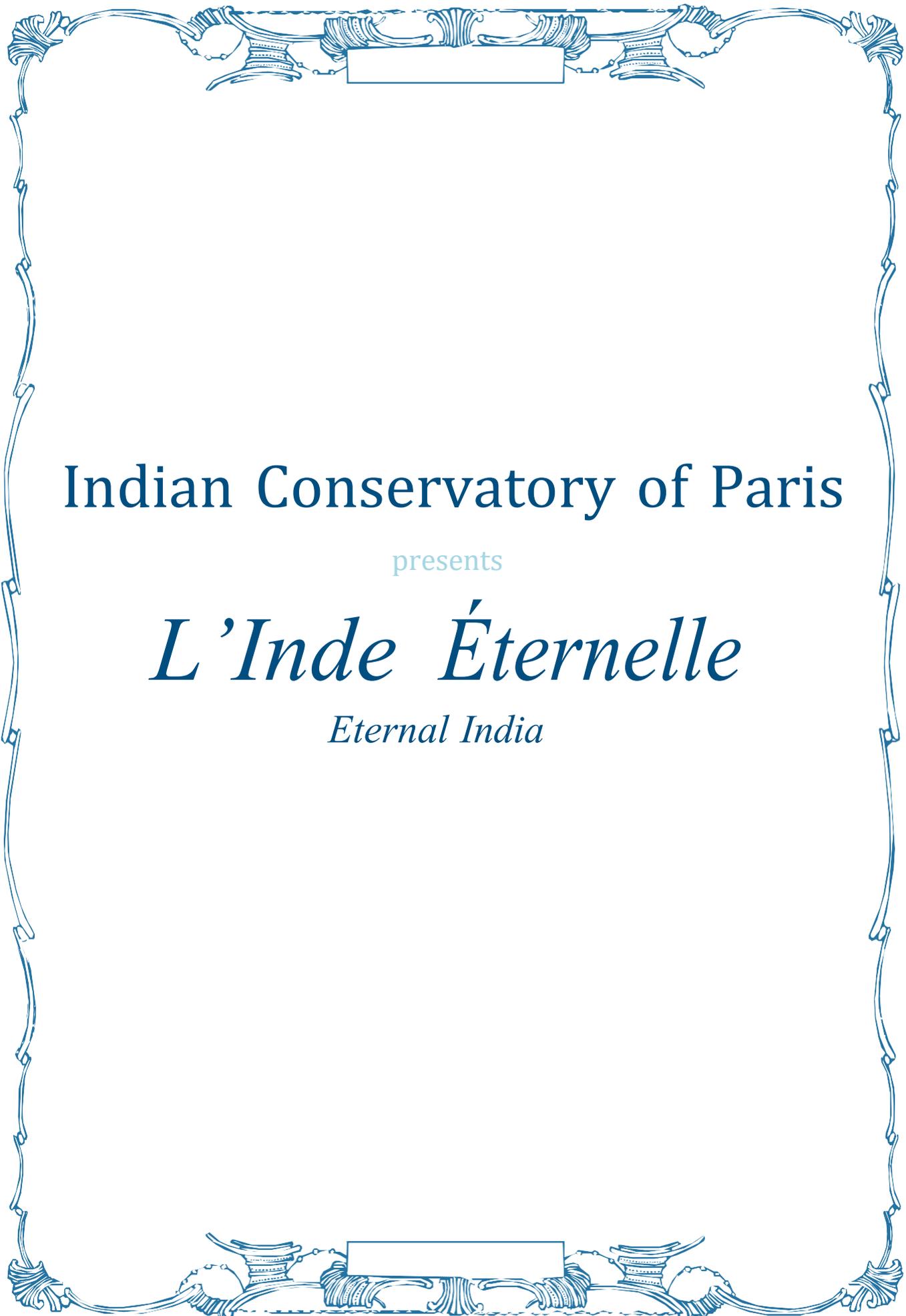
**À L'HONNEUR : ITINÉRAIRE D'UNE ARTISTE
SANS FRONTIÈRES**

**AVEC DES ÉCRITS SUR LA SCULPTURE, LA POÉSIE ET
BIEN PLUS ENCORE**

UNE SECTION SPÉCIALE PAR LES ENFANTS

**OCTOBER 2025
ISSUE NO.02**





Indian Conservatory of Paris

presents

L'Inde Éternelle

Eternal India

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The team

Founder-President & Editor-in-Chief

Bhavana Pradyumna

President

Pradyumna Kandadai

Editor

Daya Surabhi Balaji

Nadine Ayen

Designer

Amruthavarshini Mahankali

Language and Proof reading associate

Aniruddha P Kandadai





Bhavana Pradyumna

Editor-in-Chief

Bhavana Pradyumna is a Carnatic vocalist, veena artiste, Bharatanatyam dancer, and founder of the Indian Conservatory of Paris. She curated India's cultural showcase at the 2024 Paris Olympic Fan Zone, earning recognition from the Prime Minister of India. An author of Children's Carnatic, Approach to Music- The Indian way (Vol. 1 & 2), and Raga & Yoga, she pioneers global access to Indian classical arts through education, performance, and cultural diplomacy.



Pradyumna S Kandadai

President

Business Solution Director at Manhattan Associates and a seeker of Yogic Knowledge, Pradyumna is the co-founder and the current President of the Indian Conservatory of Paris (2024 - present). His genius lies in channelizing his creative energies to elevate customer experience for Haute Couture Brands. His prowess is also extended to the books published through ICParis as he has edited and compiled the books. His vision, calm, and management skills lay the foundation for ICParis.



Daya Surabhi Balaji

Editor

Daya Surabhi Balaji is a freelance writer based in Aesch, Switzerland, with a passion for language and storytelling. With degrees in English Literature and experience as a copy editor, communications trainer, and IB English tutor, she has contributed to major publications and publishing houses. Her work explores stories that connect communities and highlight shared human experiences.



Nadine Ayen

Editor

Nadine Ayen, born in India to a Franco-Tamil family, grew up in Pondicherry immersed in both French and Indian cultures. Introduced to Carnatic music by her mother, she developed a deep love for its rich traditions from a young age. After completing her studies in India, she pursued an MS in Optics, Lasers, and Plasmas at the University of Orléans and the University of Texas at Dallas, along with an MBA from IAE Orléans. Now based in France, she works as an optical engineer at Valeo, creating design methodologies for global teams. As General Secretary of the Indian Conservatory of Paris, she plays an active role in its cultural initiatives. She also contributed to the Bhagavad Gita Doodles project by translating all episodes into French.



Amruthavarshini Mahankali

Designer

Amruthavarshini Mahankali is a trained Carnatic vocalist who began her musical journey under her mother, Bhagavathula Ratnavali, and later trained under Dr. D.V. Mohana Krishna. She is also trained in light music in India, exploring diverse forms such as film music, Tarangams, Ashtapadis, and Annamacharya keertanas. She is working in the pharma sector after her Masters in Management degree at ESSEC Business School in Paris and is passionate about bringing culture into a contemporary light through creative writing, music, and storytelling.



Aniruddha P Kandadai

Language & Proofreading Associate

Aniruddha Pradyumna Kandadai (13) is a gifted young musician trained in Carnatic vocal, Veena, Mridangam, Konnakol, and world percussion. Performing since age 8 across France, Czech Republic, and India, he is also the creator of Amarakosha doodle videos. A chess enthusiast and passionate linguist, he speaks Sanskrit, Kannada, Tamil, English, and French, and is learning Latin, Spanish, German, and Telugu—embodying a rare blend of musical, intellectual, and cultural brilliance.





Sous la plume de l'Éditrice

Alors que je rédige cette deuxième édition de la rubrique "De la plume de la rédactrice, je suis remplie de gratitude pour l'encouragement et le soutien que nous avons reçus à l'occasion de notre premier numéro. Au Conservatoire Indien de Paris, nous tenons à exprimer notre profonde gratitude à Madame Samia Badat-Karam, adjointe au maire, pour sa préface inspirante dans la toute première édition de L'Inde Éternelle. Ce numéro inaugural célébrait la magnifique vie de Veena Balachander, les accomplissements de Veena Murthy Vijay, ainsi que les contributions émouvantes d'enfants du monde entier — chaque page ayant été soigneusement et affectueusement élaborée par notre équipe éditoriale.

Aujourd'hui, alors que le Conservatoire Indien de Paris entre dans sa dixième année en ce mois d'octobre, nous vous souhaitons la bienvenue dans ce deuxième numéro, où nous mettons en lumière le parcours artistique de Shakuntala, une danseuse française qui a consacré sa vie au Bharatanatyam et au Koodiyattam, deux des traditions classiques les plus profondes de l'Inde. À côté de son histoire, le journal explore l'univers riche des tissages indiens, de l'Ayurveda, du Yoga, et de la sagesse intemporelle qui les relie. Un espace particulier est également dédié aux enfants, dont les voix nous rappellent la pureté et la joie que l'art apporte à la vie. Nous exprimons aussi notre profonde gratitude à Son Excellence Monsieur l'Ambassadeur Sanjeev Singla, Ambassade de l'Inde en France, pour la préface qu'il a rédigée avec bienveillance pour cette édition et pour son soutien constant dans le renforcement des liens culturels indo-français.



Cette édition revêt pour moi une signification toute particulière, car elle coïncide avec Deepavali — la fête des lumières. En poursuivant l'écriture de cette rubrique, je me souviens que la véritable illumination réside dans le partage du savoir, de la compassion et de la créativité. Tout comme chaque lampe en éclaire une autre, que chaque histoire, mélodie et idée de ces pages répande sa lumière dans les cœurs, les foyers et les horizons.

Au nom de toute notre équipe éditoriale, je vous souhaite à toutes et à tous une très joyeuse fête de Deepavali.

Bhavana Pradyumna

Rédactrice en chef

From the Editor's quill

As I pen this second edition of the From the Editor's Quill column, I am filled with gratitude for the encouragement and support we received for our first issue. We at the Indian Conservatory of Paris remain deeply grateful to the Deputy Mayor Samia for her inspiring preface in our very first edition of L'Inde Éternelle. The inaugural issue celebrated the beautiful life story of Veena Balachander, the accomplishments of Veena Murthy Vijay, and the heartfelt entries from children around the world — each page lovingly crafted by our editorial team with care and affection.

Now, as the Indian Conservatory of Paris enters its 10th anniversary this October, we welcome you to this second issue, where we highlight the artistic journey of Shakuntala, a French dancer who has devoted her life to Bharatanatyam and Kudiyaattam, two of India's most profound classical traditions. Alongside her story, the journal explores the rich world of Indian Weaves, Ayurveda, Yoga, and the timeless wisdom that connects them all. A special space is also dedicated to children, whose voices remind us of the purity and joy that art brings to life. We are also deeply thankful to His Excellency Ambassador Sanjeev Singla, Embassy of India, France, for graciously writing the preface to this edition and for his continued support in strengthening Indo-French cultural ties.

This edition holds a special significance for me as it coincides with Deepavali- the festival of lights. As I continue to write this column, I am reminded that the true illumination lies in sharing knowledge, compassion, and creativity. Just as every lamp brightens another, may each story, melody, and idea in these pages spread light across hearts, homes, and horizons.

On behalf of our editorial team, I wish you all a very Happy Deepavali.

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As the Indian Conservatory of Paris enters its 10th anniversary this October, we continue our mission to build bridges between India and France through music, dance, and culture. This milestone year also marks the launch of Mythri – Mes Amis, celebrating friendship and shared creativity — a reflection of our commitment to dialogue, harmony, and exchange.

In this second edition, we are honoured to highlight the artistic journey of Shakuntala, a French dancer who has devoted her life to Bharatanatyam and Kudiyyattam, two of India's most profound classical traditions. Alongside her story, the journal explores the rich world of Indian weaves, Ayurveda, Yoga, and the timeless wisdom that connects them all. A special space is also dedicated to children, whose voices remind us of the purity and joy that art brings to life.

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As this edition is released in the month of Deepavali, the festival of lights, we are reminded that true illumination lies in sharing knowledge, compassion, and creativity. Just as every lamp brightens another, may each story, melody, and idea in these pages spread light — across hearts, homes, and horizons.

Each issue of L'Inde Éternelle is a collective journey — of art, heritage, and human connection. We thank all our contributors, readers, and friends for walking with us on this path of celebration and discovery. May this shared love for India's eternal culture continue to inspire hearts across borders.

Bhavana Pradyumna

Editor-in-Chief

A Decade of Harmony: The Journey of the Indian Conservatory of Paris

From Paris to Bengaluru, the Indian Conservatory of Paris (ICParis) continues its journey of connecting people through art, music, and culture — celebrating ten years of Indo-French friendship under the theme “Mythri Mes Amis”. This milestone year reflects how far we have come and how meaningfully our efforts have taken root across continents



The Bengaluru Chapter Launch — August 23, 2025

The Indian Conservatory of Paris – Bengaluru Chapter was launched on August 23rd at the historic Kannada Sahitya Parishat. This landmark event witnessed the voices of Karnataka’s greatest writers, poets, and thinkers. To inaugurate our new chapter in such a space of literary legacy was deeply symbolic — a reminder that art, in all its forms, springs from the same creative soil.

We were honoured to have Smt. Veena Murthy Vijay, Shri Mahesh Joshi, Chairman of Sahitya Akademi, and Dr. Chinmaya P. Chigateri, President of Alliance Française de Bangalore, as our esteemed dignitaries.

A highlight of the event was the release of the first issue of our bilingual magazine, *L’Inde Éternelle*. It is a celebration of the ongoing dialogue between Indian and French culture through art, literature, and heritage. The gathering reflected a shared vision — to nurture creativity, preserve tradition, and celebrate Bengaluru’s living treasures.

Mythri Mes Amis: ICParis@10 Curtain Riser Concert: Sanaatana

Our 10th anniversary celebrations began in Paris with the Curtain Riser Concert, Sanaatana, under the theme “Mythri Mes Amis”. The concert was a profound tribute to the parampara of the legendary Guru Karaikkudi Mani Iyer, one of the greatest torchbearers of rhythm in Indian classical music.



Courtesy ICParis: Bhavana Pradyumna

Every artist on stage — the vocalist, mridangist, and ghatam vidwan — belonged to this rich lineage, embodying the precision, grace, and depth of the Karaikkudi school.

The concert opened with a Shahana Varnam, followed by a Kaavava Alaapana filled with emotion and strength. The brisk “Shobhillu” brought joy and rhythm to the air, while the Dwijavanti unfolded with serene beauty. The finale — a Tillana and Shobhane of Tyagaraja — evoked deep devotion and melody, leaving the audience immersed in the essence of tradition.

More than a performance, Sanaatana was a heartfelt offering — an affirmation that our musical heritage continues to live vibrantly through generations, connecting hearts across oceans.



Academic excellence

ICParis continues to uphold academic standards through its affiliation with the Tamil Nadu Dr. J Jayalithaa Music and Fine Arts University.

Our first batch of students successfully completed their Grade and Diploma examinations with excellent results — a proud moment that reflects their dedication and the guidance of our faculty. Their achievement strengthens our belief that authentic, structured learning is the truest path to preserving tradition.

Expanding Footprints in France

Our journey in France has been one of steady growth, built on passion and community.

In Courbevoie, Bharatanatyam classes for both adults and children have taken off beautifully. Each session brings together students of all backgrounds, eager to explore movement, rhythm, and storytelling through dance.

In Paris 16, our two centers — Dalle Sarrail and Gymnase Suchet — now resonate with the sounds of Yoga, Yoga Therapy, Carnatic Music, and Bharatanatyam. These are not just classrooms, but living spaces of art and friendship — where a French student hums her first raga, a child learns her first adavu, and a yoga learner discovers the poetry of Sanskrit chants.

The enthusiasm from both Indian and French communities has been overwhelming, reaffirming that the language of art truly knows no borders.



Courtesy ICParis: Bhavana Pradyumna

Continuing the Journey



As we step into our second decade, “Mythri Mes Amis” continues to celebrate friendship and collaboration. Our next major event is a concert and workshop by violinist Lalgudi Vijayalakshmi, honouring yet another illustrious tradition — the Lalgudi Bani, known for its lyrical beauty, precision, and deep emotional expression.

Meanwhile, enrollments have begun for the upcoming academic year for the Tamil Nadu University certifications in Grades and Diploma, welcoming new students who wish to pursue music and dance through a structured curriculum.

Our bilingual magazine, L’Inde Éternelle, will also continue to grow — bringing together voices from India and France, highlighting stories of art, language, yoga, philosophy, and music. Each issue will remain true to its name — celebrating the timeless essence of Eternal India in the heart of Europe.

From Paris to Bengaluru, and through every centre in between, our journey continues — guided by sincerity, friendship, and the enduring power of the arts to connect humanity.

Shakuntala: Itinéraire d'une artiste sans frontières

Shakuntala fut disciple de Sri V.S. Muthuswamy Pillai, l'un des plus grands maîtres contemporains de cet art, pendant plus de vingt ans. Pour l'Abhinaya, Lakshmi Vishwanathan et Kalanidy Narayanan furent ses maîtres. Elle se produit et enseigne en Inde, en Europe et dans le monde pour transmettre la beauté de son art à un public toujours plus nombreux. Depuis 2016 elle pratique le Kuddiyattam avec Kalamandalam Dr. Krishnendu au Kérala.

Identité & Monde intérieur



Shakuntala-Bharatanatyam

Quand vous dansez le Bharatanatyam ou le Koodiyattam, vous sentez-vous davantage française, indienne, ou au-delà des deux ?

Au-delà des deux, je me vois plutôt comme une artiste universelle. La danse pour moi, et ce depuis mes premiers pas, a toujours été un moyen pour explorer et témoigner de l'existence d'une autre réalité, indicible.

Avant la danse, il y eut le désert. J'ai grandi dans une minuscule oasis aux confins du Sahara. C'est là qu'un jour...

« Assise à l'ombre d'un palmier, perdue dans ma rêverie, je regarde sans voir l'étendue de sable doré qui s'éloigne de moi à perte de vue. Sous l'effet de la chaleur, l'air vibre et son mouvement ressemble aux lentes oscillations d'un serpent. Graduellement, le paysage dans son intégralité se met à briller d'un éclat particulier, irréel, comme si l'air s'était peu à peu chargé d'une multitude de particules brillantes et denses, d'une fine poussière d'étoiles. Tout devient lumière, le sable, les palmiers, le vent, je ne distingue plus aucun contour.

À l'intérieur de ma tête, un léger chuintement semblable au murmure de la mer dans le creux d'un coquillage, il s'accroît, devient de plus en plus puissant, strident et cristallin à la fois tout en se démultipliant en une myriade de micro-sons. Il envahit jusqu'aux moindres recoins de ma tête, je ne sais plus si je suis dans le son ou si le son est en moi.

La lumière incroyablement douce et brillante inonde tout ; est-elle en dehors de moi ou en moi ? Je ne sais plus ; je n'ai plus de contour, je disparaîs comme happée par une force mystérieuse et irrésistible, tout se met à tourner de plus en plus vite, je deviens immense, légère, immatérielle, infinie, je deviens tout...

Soudain, dans un éclair, je m'écrase brutalement dans la réalité. Le palmier le sable, la chaleur. Qu'est-ce qui m'a fait chuter, le doute, la peur ? Peur de quoi ? Il m'a semblé que si je disais oui j'aurais pu m'éloigner à jamais dans cet espace illimité, j'aurais pu ne plus revenir, rejoindre les étoiles et scintiller avec elles, sans corps.

Incapable de raconter avec des mots l'étrange voyage que je venais de vivre, je gardais le silence, mais en moi brûlait le désir de communiquer ce que j'avais pressenti. Aussi, lorsque la danse vint à moi quelques années plus tard, je vis là le moyen de manifester l'invisible, sans parole. Sans avoir choisi, j'ai dit oui ; un oui silencieux mais entier, un oui inconditionnel, impérieux. »

Votre rapport au silence et à l'immobilité a-t-il changé grâce à ces formes d'art ?

L'expérience du désert m'a permis d'aborder le mouvement par le prisme du silence et de l'immobilité.

Le style de mon maître Sri V.S. Muthuswamy Pillai est très rapide et complexe rythmiquement. Le seul moyen que j'ai trouvé pour maîtriser cette vitesse est d'être immobile intérieurement. Pour ressentir pleinement la musique, le silence intérieur est impératif.

Si vous devriez vous décrire aujourd'hui par un seul mudra, lequel choisiriez-vous et pourquoi ?

Je choisirais le Hasta ALAPADMA : Il représente l'ouverture du cœur.

Philosophie artistique

Beaucoup parlent de discipline, mais vous avez choisi des chemins à la fois exigeants et atypiques. Quel dialogue intérieur vous pousse à continuer ?

L'excellence technique et la maîtrise de tous les aspects de la danse est le minimum requis pour monter sur scène. C'est une discipline, une exigence de chaque jour, une ascèse. Pendant des années j'ai pratiqué jusqu'à 8 heures par jour. Durant les mois de création d'un nouveau spectacle, rien d'autre n'existait.

Je crois, peut-être de manière un peu idéaliste, que l'art peut transformer le monde, une personne à la fois.

C'est ce qui me pousse à continuer.

Vous avez travaillé avec l'abstraction (Rûmî, musique de cristal). Selon vous, la danse classique doit elle évoluer en s'ouvrant à ces nouvelles matières ou rester pure ?

La danse traditionnelle évolue naturellement avec son temps.

Dans le temple, la danse était conditionnée par l'espace dédié qui était très limité. Quand elle est sortie du temple, elle s'est élancée sur des scènes de plus en plus grandes. Il fallut élargir l'occupation de l'espace.

L'évolution dépend de chaque artiste. Certain(e)s ressentent le besoin d'explorer des formes nouvelles, d'autres maintiennent la continuité de la danse classique traditionnelle.



Shakuntala Aananda Lahari

Chaque artiste est libre dans sa démarche. La seule réserve que je pourrais avoir est qu'il me semble essentiel de préserver l'intégrité du style pratiqué. Ne pas galvauder la composition inhérente à chaque pièce du répertoire.

Par exemple, la musique utilisée pour faire des expérimentations doit, selon moi, être différente de celle de la danse classique. En ce qui me concerne, j'ai mené aussi loin que j'ai pu la forme classique traditionnelle, le Margam, avant de commencer à expérimenter.

J'ai tout d'abord conservé un langage classique en faisant évoluer le récit. J'ai ensuite abordé des textes de différentes traditions, que je dis en dansant, et enfin j'ai exploré des formes abstraites à partir du vocabulaire classique.

J'ai vu des expérimentations qui utilisent la musique de chorégraphies classiques pour en faire autre chose, parfois de manière irrévérencieuse. Un style est cohérent en lui-même. Un certain respect est nécessaire. Il est inutile de détruire pour créer de nouvelles formes.

L'artiste doit s'effacer pour servir l'art.



Shakuntala, koodiyaatam

Parcours cachés

Y a-t-il eu un moment où vous avez douté de votre choix — où vous vous êtes demandé si vous n'auriez pas dû prendre une voie plus simple ?

Je ne me suis jamais posé la question en ces termes, tout simplement parce que je n'ai rien choisi : Le Bharata-Natyam s'est imposé à moi.

Depuis le début tout a toujours été évident sans remise en question, même dans les moments les plus difficiles

En ayant embrassé le Bharatanatyam puis le Koodiyattam relativement tard, comment vivez-vous la résistance — et la sagesse — du corps qui vieillit ?

J'avais 16 ans, quand j'ai découvert le Bharata-Natyam au travers du livre de Louis Frédéric « la danse sacrée ». J'étais déjà danseuse. J'ai eu la chance et le privilège d'avoir hérité de beaucoup d'énergie et de résistance physique. J'ai embrassé le Koodiyatham et le NanyarKoothu en 2016. Ces styles sont moins exigeants physiquement que le Bharata-Natyam et conviennent parfaitement à l'évolution de mes capacités physiques. Toutefois il me faut aussi évoluer avec l'âge,

*Être à l'écoute du corps est le secret.
Avec le temps la danse devient vibration, énergie pure.*

Pourriez-vous partager un souvenir intime avec votre maître qui vous guide encore aujourd'hui, mais qui n'a jamais été publié dans des livres ou articles ?

Le 24 Octobre 1974, J'ai rencontré mon maître, Muthuswamy Pillaï le jour même de mon arrivée à Madras, « par hasard » !

Il n'avait pas d'élève alors et jusqu'à ce jour je pense que cette rencontre n'était pas fortuite.

Entre deux mondes

Comment expliquez-vous ces traditions à quelqu'un en France qui n'a jamais vu de danse classique indienne — non pas par des mots, mais par des sensations ?

Le Bharata-Natyam, danse de la terre de l'Inde, danse puissante, fortement architecturée, enfonce ses racines au cœur même de l'Univers. Elle demande une grande précision rythmique, une parfaite maîtrise du geste, un sens aigu du mouvement dans l'espace et, par-dessus tout, un esprit agile, toujours en éveil.

Lorsqu'elle débute son apprentissage, la danseuse, (ou le danseur) commence par battre le sol avec les pieds comme s'il lui fallait en éprouver la résistance, s'y enraciner pour mieux s'élever.



Shakuntala, muttuswamy and musicians

Son appartenance à la terre ainsi affirmée, celle dont le corps, tel un arbre, se dresse vers le ciel, ouvre les bras dans l'espace, parallèles au sol. Ils sont l'image de l'horizon d'où émerge la tête, siège de la pensée, visage aux mille facettes où se peindront tour à tour, tous les sentiments terrestres, toutes les émotions qui habitent l'être à la recherche de son identité. Le visage devient transparent.

Comment expliquez-vous ces traditions à quelqu'un en France qui n'a jamais vu de danse classique indienne — non pas par des mots, mais par des sensations ?

L'inde et la France me voient comme la française qui danse le Bharata-Natyam. Au-delà de la forme, à laquelle je reste fidèle, je me vois comme une artiste universelle.

Vous avez travaillé sur l'histoire de Nandanar, liée à l'exclusion. Dans votre propre vie, vous êtes vous déjà sentie « en marge » dans l'une ou l'autre culture ?

Lorsque j'ai créé « Nataraj ou l'autre voie », basé sur l'histoire de Nandanar, je venais de me voir refusé une fois de plus une aide à la création par le ministère de la culture.

J'étais fatiguée de ces refus successifs, année après année.

J'ai souhaité explorer la question de la marge, de la frontière, de la limite ; être dedans ou dehors. Ce spectacle m'a ouvert en Inde les portes de plusieurs lieux insolites.

Regard vers l'avenir

Quel personnage ou quelle histoire rêvez-vous encore de porter sur scène ?

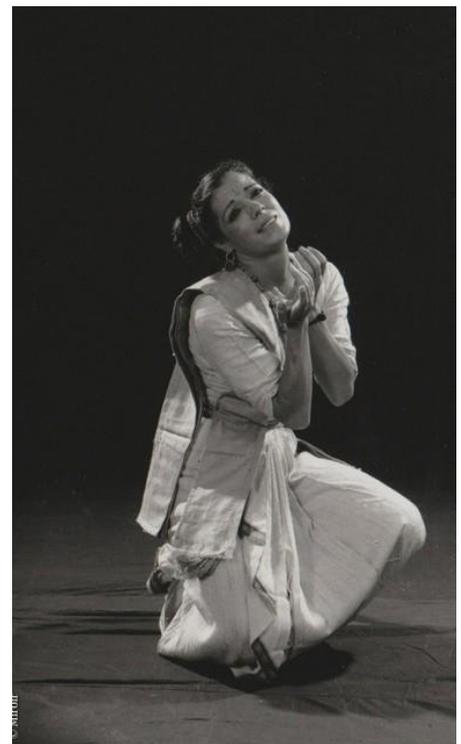
J'ai de nombreux projets dont celui de reprendre ma Trilogie avec de jeunes danseurs.

Si vous ne pouviez transmettre qu'une seule leçon — non pas une technique, mais une vérité à la prochaine génération de danseurs, laquelle serait-elle ?

Le travail, jour après jour.

La danse indienne n'est pas simplement une technique à acquérir, il s'agit d'embrasser toute une culture ; C'est le cheminement d'une vie !

Ne pas brûler les étapes, se mettre au service de la danse, avancer avec respect, humilité, patience et profondeur sur ce chemin et surtout, ne jamais pratiquer face à un miroir (sauf parfois pour l'Abhinaya), sentir le mouvement de l'intérieur avec « l'œil de Shiva »



Shakuntala, muttuswamy and musicians



Shakuntala Métamorphose

Après toutes ces décennies dans l'univers des arts indiens, qu'est-ce qui demeure pour vous un mystère, quelque chose que vous n'avez pas encore compris ?

La vie est un mystère. L'Inde m'a saisie, elle m'a bercée, elle m'a bousculée, elle m'a transformée et me transforme encore.

Je me suis remise en route pour apprendre le Kudiattam, c'est une aventure difficile, encore une autre vision de l'Inde au Kérala et c'est exaltant ; un remède infallible contre le vieillissement !

*By Bhavana Pradyumna,
Paris, France*

Ashtavidha Ahara Ayatana: The Eight Pillars of Conscious Eating in Ayurveda

आहारशुद्धौ सत्त्वशुद्धिः ; सत्त्वशुद्धौ धर्मोऽधमहेतुकम्।”

Āhāra-śuddhau sattva-śuddhiḥ; sattva-śuddhau dharmo 'dharma hetu-kam.

(When food is pure, the mind becomes pure; when the mind is pure, one's duty and conduct follow rightly)



In the Charaka Saṃhitā, Acharya Charaka teaches that health, strength, complexion, and vitality all rest upon Ahara—our food. Disease begins in Agni, the digestive fire; when it is robust, nourishment proceeds well. When Agni falters, even good food can produce toxins (Ama).

To guide us toward harmonious digestion and well-being, Charaka describes Ashtavidha Ahara Vidhi Vishesha Ayatana—the eight factors or rules of eating

Recent academic reviews affirm that applying these rules helps reduce the incidence of food intolerance, metabolic disorders, and symptoms of digestive imbalance, and many more.

Here are the eight pillars, with practical relevance:

1. Prakriti (Nature or Quality of Food)

Every food item carries inherent qualities—such as guru (heavy), laghu (light), uṣṇa (heating), and śīta (cooling). For instance, cow's milk is considered heavy, while goat's milk is regarded as light. These attributes are understood in terms of how food behaves during digestion. Uṣṇa (heating) substances generate heat in the digestive process and activate the metabolic fire, while śīta (cooling) substances have a calming effect. Similarly, heavy foods take more time to digest, whereas lighter foods are easier to assimilate. By aligning our food choices with our digestive capacity and individual constitution, we allow nourishment to build strength and harmony.

2. Karana (Method of Processing)

Processing—or samskara—changes a food’s natural character. Cooking, fermenting, roasting, storing, grinding, and even the vessel used all affect digestibility and have an overall effect on the body. Honey heated at high temperatures, for instance, is considered harmful in Ayurveda.

3. Samyoga (Combination of Foods)

Certain food combinations are wholesome; others are viruddha or incompatible. Milk with fish, milk with fruits, or equal parts honey and ghee are classic examples of combinations that disrupt digestion. Awareness of how different foods interact with each other helps avoid subtle toxicity and inflammation. Ayurveda does not encourage mixing different food items and consuming them together.

4. Rashi (Quantity of Food)

Both excessive and insufficient food intake can be harmful. Charaka distinguishes between Sarvagraha, the total quantity of a meal, and Parigraha, the amount of each individual component, such as carbohydrates, proteins, or fats. Overeating strains the digestive system, while under-eating fails to provide adequate nourishment. An imbalance in the quantity of food disrupts the natural rhythm and coordination of the body’s organ systems, ultimately affecting overall health and vitality.

5. Desha (Place — of food’s origin & eater’s habitat)

Ayurveda emphasizes alignment between Deha Deśa (the body type) and Bhoomi Deśa (the land and environment). Foods grown in specific soils and climates carry unique qualities, and what is beneficial in one region may be less suitable in another. Food should be chosen according to one’s body type, with an emphasis on consuming local items, as they naturally resonate with the body’s need.

6. Kala (Time — both seasonal & situational)

One should choose food according to the season, the time of day, the age, and the state of the body. Warm, hearty foods suit winter; cooling fruits suit summer. During illness, the diet should shift to lighter or more nourishing items depending on the condition. Eating in alignment with circadian rhythms enhances metabolism.

7. Upayoga Samstha (Rules of Eating)

This covers how to eat: freshness, warmth, pace, environment, and focus. Eat without hurry or distraction; eat only when hungry; allow the previous meal to be digested before starting the next. The body must be given enough time to absorb and assimilate what has already been taken before engaging with more food.

8. Upayokta (The Eater / Consumer)

Finally, the eater matters. Age, constitution, strength of digestion, habitual foods, and emotional state all influence how food is processed in the body. Food that suits one person may trouble another. Ayurveda addresses this in detail, emphasizing the personalization of nutrition and dietary requirements.

Ashtavidha Ahara Vidhi Vishesha Ayatana is not a ritual, but refined common sense grounded in deep observation. In our modern lives of fast food, erratic schedules, and globalized platters, these eight rules remind us that true nourishment comes from harmony: between what we eat, how and when we eat it, and who is eating. A balanced meal can be both a pleasure and medicine—if prepared, combined, and consumed with intention.

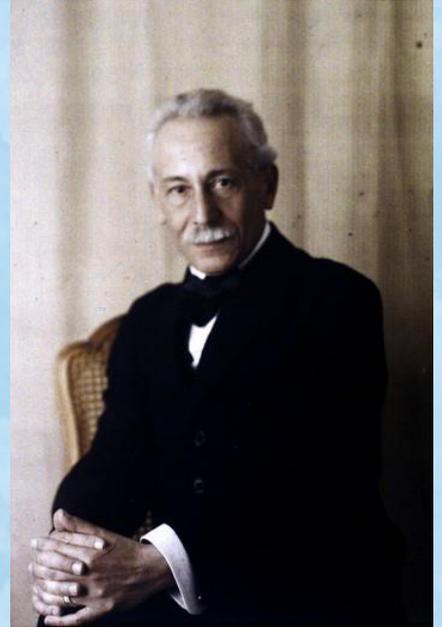
Vaidya Neha Pandey

Qualification- B.A.M.S (bachelor's in ayurveda medicine and surgery) , MD (Ayurveda)

Sylvain Lévi : le chercheur français qui a ravivé la vision de Bharata

Au début du XXe siècle, alors que l'Europe connaissait ses propres révolutions artistiques, un érudit français se mit à décoder l'un des trésors culturels les plus profonds de l'Inde — le Nāṭyaśāstra. Composé entre environ 200 avant notre ère et 200 de notre ère, ce traité s'étend sur 36 chapitres et compte près de 36 000 vers, il représente à lui seul une véritable encyclopédie des arts de la scène. Il traite du théâtre, de la musique, de la danse, de la scénographie, de l'architecture des salles de spectacle, des règles de costumes et de maquillage, de l'éclairage, des gestes (mudrā), des états émotionnels (bhāva) et de la célèbre théorie du rasa — l'expérience esthétique qui émeut et transporte le spectateur.

Au cœur du Nāṭyaśāstra se trouvent les neuf rasas ou saveurs esthétiques : śṛṅgāra (l'amour), hāsya (le rire), karuṇa (la compassion), raudra (la colère), vīra (l'héroïsme), bhayānaka (la peur), bībhatsa (le dégoût), adbhuta (l'émerveillement) et śānta (la paix). Le traité détaille également l'abhinaya (expression) — le vocabulaire des gestes faciaux, du langage corporel et de la diction — qui reste la pierre angulaire de la danse et du théâtre classiques indiens.



Sylvain Lévi (1863–1935), pionnier de l'indologie et du sanskrit, fut l'un des premiers chercheurs européens à étudier le Nāṭyaśāstra avec tout le sérieux qu'il mérite. Il a minutieusement analysé les manuscrits et publié des travaux critiques qui ont mis en lumière ce texte au sein du monde académique et ont ravivé l'intérêt pour lui en Inde même. De nombreux érudits et artistes indiens ont redécouvert le Nāṭyaśāstra grâce à l'attention que Lévi et ses contemporains lui ont portée. Son travail est souvent crédité d'avoir inspiré la renaissance des traditions de danse et de théâtre classiques en Inde au XXe siècle, notamment le Bharatanatyam et le Kathakali, qui avaient souffert sous la période coloniale.

Lévi enseigna au Collège de France et à l'École pratique des hautes études, formant des étudiants qui allaient porter les études indiennes vers de nouveaux horizons. À une époque où le discours orientaliste avait tendance à exotiser ou à minimiser les savoirs indiens, Lévi les aborda avec respect et rigueur scientifique. Ses efforts ont contribué à légitimer la théorie esthétique indienne dans le monde académique et à redonner aux intellectuels indiens une fierté renouvelée pour leur patrimoine.

Aujourd'hui, alors que le Bharatanatyam, le Kathakali et d'autres formes classiques

rayonnent sur les scènes du monde entier, il est important de se souvenir que cette renaissance doit autant aux gardiens de la tradition en Inde qu'aux passeurs culturels à l'étranger. La contribution de Lévi nous rappelle que la culture s'épanouit lorsque la curiosité dépasse les frontières.

Réflexion : Comment pouvons-nous, à notre époque, continuer à bâtir de tels ponts — afin que la sagesse des traditions du monde soit préservée, célébrée et partagée ?

Bhavana Pradyumna

The Universal Contribution of the Bhagavad Gita: A Short Feature

The Bhagavad Gita is an excerpt from one of humanity's most extensive epics, the Mahabharata, which has about 100,000 verses. It consists of a dialogue between the warrior prince Arjuna and his wise friend Krishna, moments before the battle.

In this context, Arjuna and his brothers (the Pandavas) are at war for the throne against their evil cousins, the Kauravas. The dialogue takes place because the prince finds himself confused shortly before the great war, not knowing whether what he is doing is right or not.

He then turns to Krishna for help, who begins to advise and instruct him. Krishna, in turn, dispels Arjuna's doubts in light of the philosophical knowledge found in Vedic thought, as expressed in the Vedas and the Upanishads. Krishna, in conveying these teachings, seeks not only to answer the questions of the battle but also the existential questions we all ask ourselves at the most decisive moments of our lives. The topics addressed in this dialogue, between the prince and Krishna, are central to Indian thought.

When these concepts are understood and applied correctly, they have the potential to prevent many diseases before they arise. Even in chronic or genetic conditions, Ayurvedic principles can help reduce severity, delay progression, and improve overall quality of life.

Explaining about the individual (jivaatma); the action and duties that everyone has within the creation (karma and dharma); the material world which we inhabit (prakriti); the cosmic order of the universe (isvara); and how to get involved with it, breaking free from life's vicious cycles (moksha); Krishna guides Arjuna, and obviously the readers of this work, through the richest and most profound aspects of ancient Indian wisdom.

These paths serve as pedagogical frameworks that aim to guide the reader to deeper levels of reflection, bringing the teachings to life. Thus, the Gita is a philosophical treatise that provides students with practical means of applying what they learn through questioning and reflection, as proposed in this ancient dialogue.

The first proposed path is reflection on our actions (karma yoga). We are constantly acting and having an impact on the world around us.

Our actions have consequences for us and for all beings that inhabit this same universe.

We are all connected, as our actions have implications for the lives around us. Therefore, we must reflect on each action and its potential reactions, as well as our own behavior. Our consciousness plays a crucial role in this area.

For those seeking a deeper understanding of the philosophical and existential questions of the human being, the Bhagavad-Gita proposes four methodological paths of reflection (yoga).



Then we have the methodological path of knowledge (jñāna-yoga). Through our intellect, we can think better about reality, seeking transparent and objective solutions to the problems that plague us. This requires a deep immersion in philosophical texts, which strengthen our intelligence. When we seek and nourish ourselves with wisdom, we can get a better perspective on life's situations, learn from them, and create more friendly environments for coexistence, whether with ourselves or with others.

The third path is that of introspection (dhyana-yoga). Through breathing and concentration techniques, we can calm the whirlwind of the mind and look within ourselves. This type of yoga allows us to meditate on the issues and questions that surround our being. The goal is to look within ourselves and seek self-improvement. To recognize our difficulties and virtues, so that we can improve in every aspect of our lives.

The goal is to look within ourselves and seek self-improvement

To recognize our difficulties and virtues, so that we can improve in every aspect of our lives.

Ultimately, the path of relationships and feelings (bhakti-yoga) aims to comprehend human emotions and how we interact with them. The idea is to understand human emotions so that we can benefit from their best aspects, avoiding their vices and addressing their darker sides. If we understand our emotions, it becomes easier to relate to people in a healthy way, creating more genuine and deeper bonds.

Although there are rules, regulations, and qualities expected of those on these paths, we can see from the Gita that these reflection methods seek to encompass the largest number of people who have some interest in a virtuous life. Of course, as the practitioner's commitment deepens, so do the demands. However, for those who want to embark on this journey, the start is quite comfortable and inviting.

The structure of the Bhagavad-Gita reveals how India's ancient philosophical tradition has, since time immemorial, made significant contributions to human thought.

More than theories and ideas about life and the world, ancient Indian philosophers sought, through their historical and scholarly texts, to leave practical knowledge for future generations.

This ancient wisdom reaches us today not as a mere discourse, but as a set of pedagogical techniques that lead individuals to be better for their community, but above all, better for themselves.

Caio Busani (Prithu Das)
Anthropologist
Lisbon, Portugal, September 2025.

Sacred Sounds, Ancient Scripts, and Modern Code



The women who raised me

I never had any proper training in Carnatic music during my childhood, nor do I come from a family of musicians. But I grew up very close to the Vaikunta Perumal Temple, one of the oldest in Kanchipuram. The proximity of diverse religious sites triggered my curiosity and broadened my worldview. It was a time when private media houses and social media were not dominating and clogging our spaces. At home, we had a few cassettes, one of which was the audio version of the 1965 movie Thiruvilayadal.

Amongst the many famous singers performing, I was particularly attracted to both the distinct Tamil and powerful voice of K.B. Sundarambal. On the day of Pongal, Doordarshan filled the air with the folk performance of Vijayalakshmi Navaneethakrishnan. These two divas resembled my grandmothers and fascinated me.

My mother was very attentive to my Tamil diction. She referred to the famous verses from Thiruppugazh, "Muthai tharu," popularised by T.M. Soundarajan in the biopic of the composer Arunagirinathar. For her, if one can recite those verses without any pizhai (mistake), one can master the pronunciation of any language. Later at school, during the class, my geography teacher, Mrs. Rajakanni, auditioned me to be a part of the school choir and perform for the National Days.

Thanks to one of my dad's rituals, I made it: every Tuesday morning, he would play Kandha Shasti Kavacham by the Soolamangalam Sisters. That was instrumental in my little success! There were other customs as well:

Mondays were for Vinayagar songs by Seergazhi Govindarajan; Fridays were for Mariamman songs by L.R. Easwari; and Saturdays were for Suprabhatham by the legendary M.S. Subbulakshmi.

For a long time, I innocently believed that gods and goddesses too had initials, as it was written "L.R. Easwari Amman Padalgal" on the cassette!

Much later in my thirties, when I was living in Delhi and singing along to Bruhi Mukundethi by M.S. from the film Savithri, I received a touching appreciation from a French Indophile and Indian music connoisseur, Jérôme Adam, who had heard me from the kitchen. A little encouragement can mean a lot! At Delhi Tamil Sangam, I began taking vocal coaching with Mrs. Lalitha Anand and veena classes with Mrs. Girija. Later, I moved to France and found a teacher with whom I could continue both my vocal and veena practice. The wonderful teacher Bhavana Pradyumna soon became a dear friend and a mentor. In this expatriation, she has been a precious link to my roots.

Tamil as a Compass: Literature, Philosophy, and Identity

My passion for Tamil, one of India's most ancient languages, truly ignited with Arunagirinathar whose work was majorly performed in the city.

Summer holidays at my grandparents' village allowed me to discover festivals that were not celebrated in my hometown. I distinctly remember the eighteen-day festival at the Draupadi Amman temple. My grandfather, a Tamil teacher, would recite the Villibharatam, Villiputturar, after which Kattai Koothu artists would enact the Mahabharatam, often performing throughout the entire night.

On state television, debate shows were organized around Kamban's version of Ramayanam, presenting a Tamil perspective of the legend. Intriguingly, the arguments sometimes saw Ravana's defenders present him more favourably than Rama. Beyond mere linguistic insights, these depictions instilled in me an understanding of relativity and a nuanced perspective of human nature.

In school, grammar was taught using Tolkappiyam, an ancient literary work. We were made to learn at least thirty Thirukkural annually, alongside other Sangam literature. Actually, what we were doing was to decode their understanding of the world and to link their relevance to contemporary events. This whole process with ancient texts developed my curiosity for the structured elegance of language.

Echoes of Tradition in Modern Logic: My Engineering Perspective

*kaṛka kacaṭarak karṇavai karṇapin
niṛka ataṛkut taka. – Thirukural 391*

"Learn thoroughly what should be learnt. And having learnt, stand according to that."

My immersion in Tamil literature and Carnatic music gave me the tools to become a polyglot and a computer programmer.

The highly structured nature of Carnatic music mirrors the logical architecture of complex software systems. A ragam needs to be interpreted by improvising within a strict framework. Similarly, writing a program consists in creating an original path within strict coding guidelines.

Like music, the grammatical and morphological rules of the Tamil language, codified in Tolkappiyam, taught me what syntax, parsing, and structured data are.

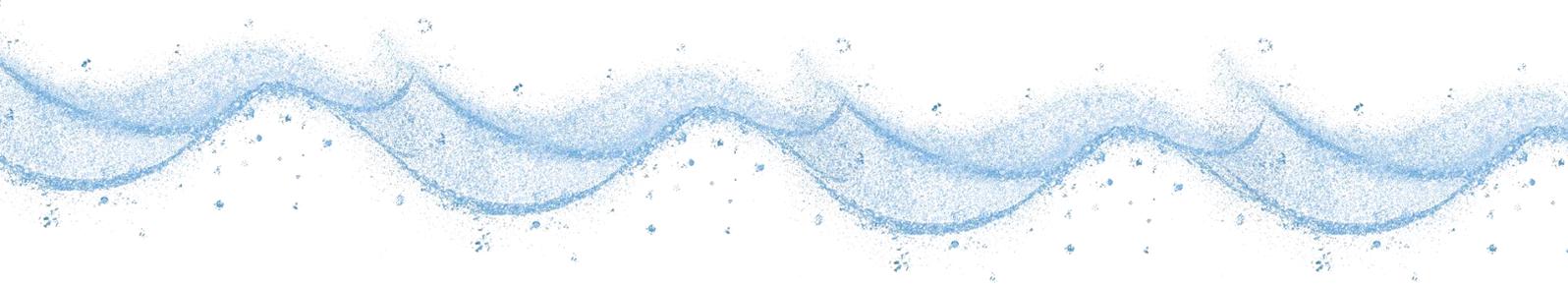
This early training in deconstructing complex music and linguistic rules into their fundamental components proved immensely valuable in my current work in High-Performance Computing. When verifying complex blocks, I see direct parallels: the functioning of the digital logic within a chip depends on how patterns of 0s and 1s received.

Complex calculations are then employed to convert these signals into what we ultimately perceive as audio or video. Here also, Carnatic music is my enabler to interpret these protocols, identify patterns and anticipate logical flows.

Just as the systematic ascent (arohana) and descent (avarohana) of notes train the mind to recognize and predict melodic sequences. The programming world which is usually perceived rational and cold is very much rooted in the love for language, literature and arts.

Could the rigorous patterns of Carnatic music and the systematic beauty of language be a contributing factor to the outstanding number of South Indians succeeding in Engineering?

Sivasankar KARUNAKARAN



Namaskar-Why do we touch the feet of elders and put our hands together in respect?

In Indian culture, when we greet people, we say 'Namaste'. When we meet someone older, we are told to touch their feet. But why do we do this? Let us explore the reason.

Greeting people without physical contact was a habit that people practiced long before the COVID-19 pandemic. Putting one's hands together in Namaste is not only hygienic; it also holds spiritual significance. It means: "May our minds meet". By doing so, one opens their mind towards the other person and allows ideas and thoughts to be shared and settle in their mind.

On the same note, we bow down and touch the feet of elders, not only because they are older than us, but because they have more experience and knowledge to share.

Even someone in a socially higher position or of authority will bow to someone wiser than they are.

For example, if we look at many of the Indian epics, we will notice that kings do the namaskar and seek the blessings of sages even though they are in a very high position.

This is the reason why we join our hands in a Namaste gesture and touch the feet of elders.

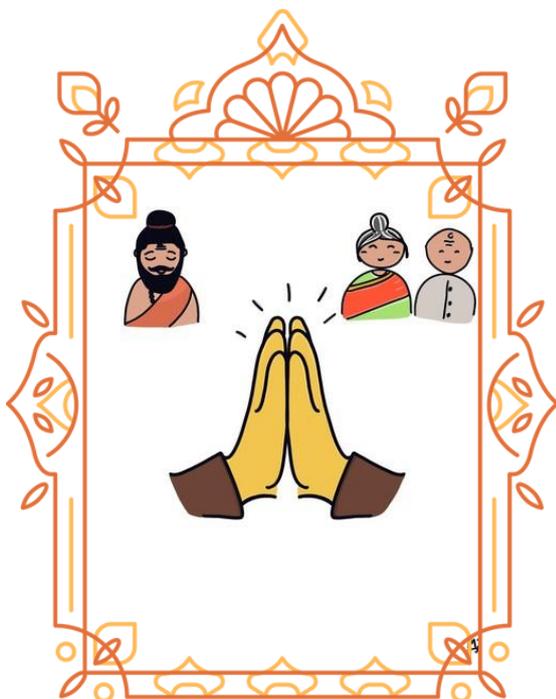


Image: Digital drawing by Manaswini Jaya Kumar
Winterthur, Switzerland

Samvidha Srinath



Muthuswami Dikshitar - A composer par excellence



Muthusamy Dikshitar is one of the trinities of Carnatic music. He was born on March 24, 1775, and died on October 21, 1835. He had 2 brothers (Chinnaswami Dikshitar and Balaswami Dikshitar). They are both musically talented. Chinnaswami also composed music and is not as popular as Muthuswami Dikshitar, while Balaswami Dikshitar popularized the Violin. All of his training took place at home and in Sanskrit. Maybe that is the reason most of his compositions are in Sanskrit. He composed around 500 kruthis. This year, 2025, marks the 250th birth anniversary of Dikshitar

His most notable works are:

Navagraha Krithis:

One of his friends was suffering from an illness, and it was believed to be caused by planetary positions. Muthuswami Dikshitar had profound knowledge in astrology and shastra. So, he decided to compose songs on the Navagraha and used music for healing.

Kamalamba Navavarna Krithi:

Dikshitar composed a set of 9 kritis on Goddess Tripurasundari, which is popularly called the Kamalamba Naavavarna series, excluding 1 dhyana and 1 mangala krithis, which also form a part of the series, though an invocatory and an end piece.

Pamcha Bhoota Stala Kritis:

All these 5 kritis were composed when he visited these temples in South India. All of the compositions are on Lord Shiva,

Nottuswaram Sahityams:

When in Manali, a place near Madras, Dikshitar got exposure to western music and violin, which led to the birth of these beautiful sahityams. One of his nottuswaram santatham pahimam is inspired by the British National Anthem.

Dikshitar, as a Unique composer:

His mudra is GuruGruha. Also, in some creation, Muthuswami Dikshitar adds a Raga mudra. Raga mudra is a very fascinating and unique feature in some of his compositions. A Raga mudra is the explicit mention of the raga's name in the lyrics of a composition, often subtly and poetically woven into the line.

Examples:

In the ragam Nasamani – Shri Rama Sawarawathi. In the charanam, it says taradrusha nasamani virajitham ...,

In Vatapi Ganapathi, you can see the raga mudra in the last line of the song, hamsadhwani booshita herambam.

These are very fascinating and unique features in some of his compositions.

Write-up and Illustration by
Urjita Krishnan ,11,
Houston, USA

KNOW YOUR RAGA

#Vasantha

Recently, I had an opportunity to present the Vasantha Raga Alapana (improvisational part) at the prestigious venue Le Mandapa in Paris. This unique and vibrant raga, Vasantha, is popular for its vivid and rare colors. It is an inherently Carnatic raga, a janya of the 17th Melakarta raga Suryakantam. And it has also been prolifically used in Tamil cinema. Why don't we take a closer look at this fascinating raga that captivates the attention of anyone? Vasantha has a very zig-zag scale. The arohanam is usually sung in two distinct ways.

Aa: S, M1, G3, M1, D2, N3, S

or

S, G3, M1, D2, N3, S

The avarohanam is a bit different as it includes a note that is not used in the ascent. Can you spot which one? Can you also spot the note that we don't sing? It is P (the note G in Western notation). The note P is omitted in this raga.

SN3 D2 M1 G3 R1 S

I'm sure most of you have heard this flavor somewhere or the other. Many of you would have heard the popular Carnatic classical Krithis-songs- like Mal Maruga Shanmuga, Seetamma Mayamma by Shri Tyagaraja, and Hari Hara Putram by Muthuswami Dikshitar, etc, in this raga.

Each of these krithis presents a different shade of Vasantha, like strong and powerful, calm and meditative, and quick and spritely. This just goes to show the flexibility with which this raga has been handled. The most popular film song in this raga, which I very recently got to know and which many of you might be familiar with, is Minsara Poove from the movie Padaiyappa, sung by Smt. Nityashree Mahadevan.

Do you know what Vasantha even means? It means 'spring'. Isn't that just wonderful? All those different colors come together to create a wonderful scene that can surely be replicated when sung or played. So next time when spring arrives, listen carefully and spot Vasantha in your surroundings, and if possible, sing along too.



Picture: Vasantha Ruthu -Spring days,
Colmar

Photo Credit: Surabhi Balaji
-Akshara, Aesch, Switzerland
15 years



KNOW YOUR RAGA

#Vasantha

Récemment, j'ai eu l'occasion de présenter un Alapana (partie improvisée) du raga Vasantha dans le prestigieux lieu Le Mandapa à Paris. Ce raga unique et profond, Vasantha, est populaire pour ses couleurs vives et rares. C'est un raga purement carnatique, un janya (dérivé) du 17e Melakartha raga Suryakantam. Il a également été largement utilisé dans le cinéma Tamoul. Pourquoi ne pas regarder de plus près ce raga fascinant qui capte l'attention de ceux qui l'écoutent ? Vasantha a une gamme très sinueuse (en zigzag). L'arohanam est généralement chanté de deux manières distinctes.

Aa: S, M1, G3, M1, D2, N3, S

or

S, G3, M1, D2, N3, S

L'avarohanam est un peu différent car il inclut une note qui n'est pas utilisée dans l'ascension. Pouvez-vous repérer laquelle ? Pouvez-vous aussi identifier la note que l'on ne chante pas ? C'est P (la note G en notation occidentale). La note P est omise dans ce raga.

SN3 D2 M1 G3 R1 S

Je suis sûre que la plupart d'entre vous ont déjà entendu cette couleur quelque part. Beaucoup d'entre vous connaissent sûrement les krithis (chansons carnatiques classiques) populaires comme Mal Maruga Shanmuga, Seetamma Mayamma de Shri Tyagaraja, et Hari Hara Putram de Muthuswami Dikshitar, etc., dans ce raga.

Chacun de ces krithis présente une nuance différente de Vasantha — forte et puissante, calme et méditative, rapide et vive. Cela montre la flexibilité avec laquelle ce raga a été interprété. La chanson de film la plus populaire dans ce raga, que j'ai récemment découverte et que beaucoup d'entre vous connaissent sûrement, est Minsara Poove du film Padaiyappa, chantée par Smt. Nithyasree Mahadevan.

Savez-vous ce que signifie Vasantha ? Cela veut dire "printemps". N'est-ce pas merveilleux ? Toutes ces différentes couleurs se réunissent pour créer une magnifique scène qui peut être parfaitement reproduite lorsqu'on la chante ou qu'on la joue. Alors, la prochaine fois que le printemps arrive, écoutez attentivement et repérez Vasantha dans votre environnement — et si possible, chantez avec lui aussi.



Picture: Vasantha Ruthu -Spring days,

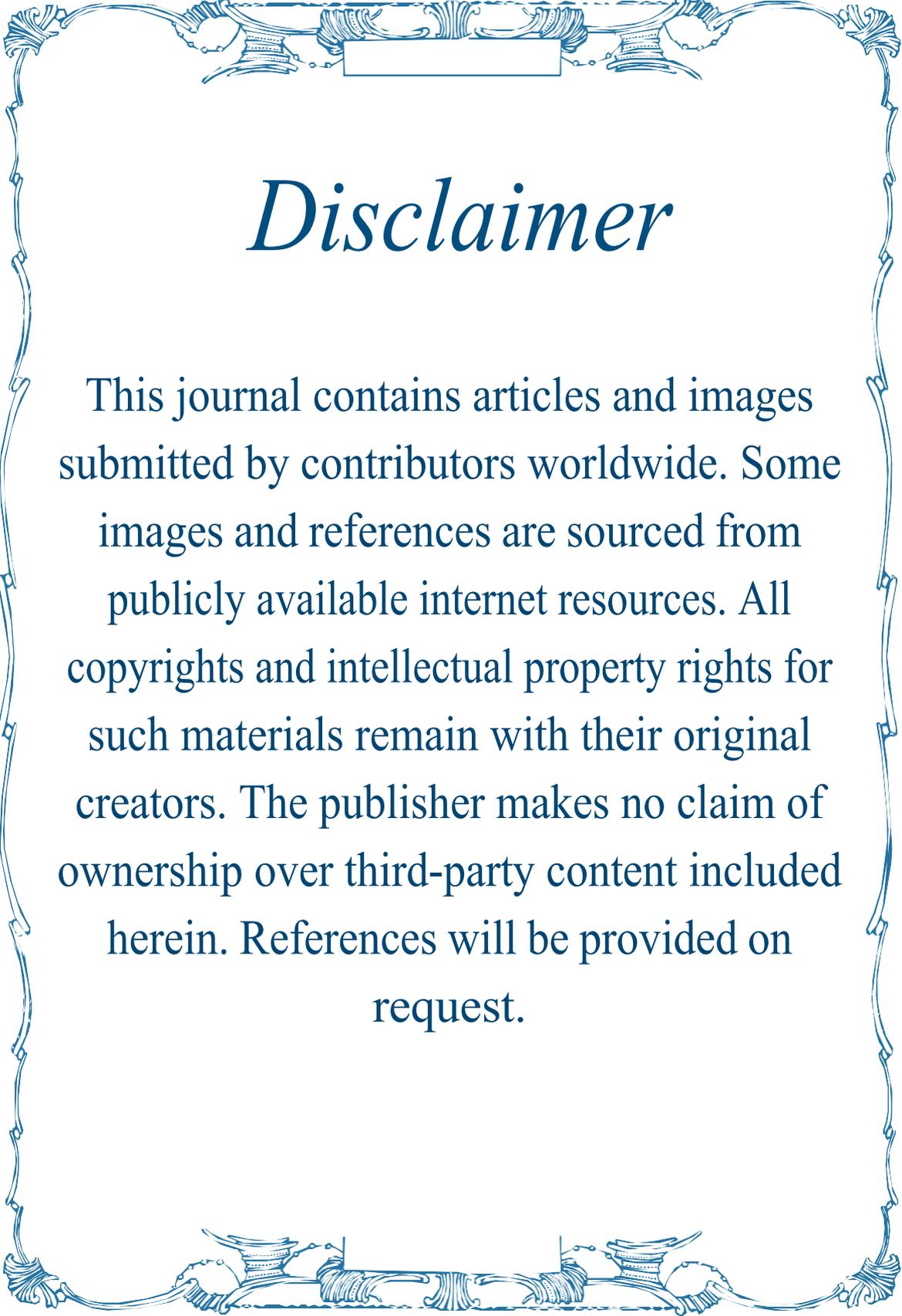
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Photo Credit: Surabhi Balaji

-Akshara, Aesch, Switzerland

15 years





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INDIAN CONSERVATORY OF PARIS



L'Inde Éternelle



Eternal India

Our second edition continues to celebrate the confluence of East and West through art and tradition that transcend borders. Within these pages, we honor a shared heritage that continues to inspire and connect us all. We hope this issue brings insight, curiosity, and joy to every reader..

