

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR
OF TAMIL NADU AT THE THEAN CHENNAI MARGAZHI UTSAVAM – 2018
ORGANISED BY NEELAKANTA SIVAN CULTURAL ACADEMY AT RAM
MANDIRAM KALYANA MANDAPAM, NAGANALLUR, CHENNAI
ON 29.12.2018 AT 6.00 P.M**

Anaivarukkum Maalai Vanakkam

Padmashri Dr. T.K. Murthy

Padmashri A. Kanyakumari

Kalaimamani Dr. S. Sowmya

Thiru. N. Ramaraj,
President, Neelakanta Sivan Cultural Academy

Distinguished Invitees

Ladies & Gentlemen

I am happy to be here for the 14th year celebration of Thean Chennai Margazhi Utsavam -2018 being organised by the Neelakanta Sivan Cultural Academy.

I note that this festival of music and dance is being held to honour the serenity of the month of Margazhi. This month of the Tamil Calendar denotes many things to many people. It is associated with the Thirupavai, the beautiful kolams designed with rice flour, the Thiru Athirai festival and with the Vaikunta Ekadashi darshan. It is therefore not surprising that the atmosphere of Chennai is filled with music and dance during this time of the year.

The auspicious month of Margazhi or Margha Shirsha as it is referred to, in the Bhagavad Gita is symbolic of Lord Krishna himself. And who else can personify the fine arts better than Lord Krishna.

Our Classical Music has a captivating audience across the globe. The secret of its vitality is its growth without losing its purity and pristine form. History reveals that in our ancient societies, music and dance were a part of daily life and they were deeply rooted in religions. There have been no civilizations without music, dance and art.

Purandara Dasa, who lived in the 15th and 16th Centuries is considered to be the father of Carnatic Music. To him goes the credit of codifying the Carnatic Music form. He was also a great composer and several thousand songs are attributed to him. After him came a great theorist of Carnatic Music Venkata Mukhi, who developed the system of classifying the ragas of Carnatic Music.

As the Carnatic Music form evolved, it attained its peak in the 18th Century when the 'Trinity' of Thyagaraja Swamigal, Shamashastry and Muthuswami Dikshitar composed their unforgettable compositions. Subsequently it was enriched by many other great composers like, Papanasam Sivan, Swati Thirunal, Annamacharya and Arunagiri Nathar.

Neelakanta Sivan who rendered his music compositions in the second half of the 19th century was a natural genius. The depth and brilliance of his compositions reveal a deep understanding of the technicalities of classical music. That Neelakanta Sivan acquired this level of excellence in his composition with very little formal training marks him out as an outstanding musician who was naturally gifted by the Grace of God.

The Neelakanta Sivan Cultural academy deserves the appreciation of all lovers of Carnatic Music for not only organizing Cultural Festivals every year for honoring the legacy of Neelakanta Sivan but also for upholding the Guru Parampara tradition.

The Guru-Shishya tradition denotes relationship and mentoring where learning is transmitted from a guru to a shishya. Such knowledge, whether it be Vedic, agamic, architectural, musical or spiritual, is imparted through a relationship between the guru and the disciple developed over many years of continuous and committed learning. The student eventually masters the knowledge that the guru embodies.

In the early oral traditions of the Upanishads, the guru–shishya relationship had evolved into a fundamental component of Hinduism. The term "Upanishad" is derived from the Sanskrit words "upa" (near), "ni" (down) and "ṣad" (to sit) — so it means "sitting down near" a spiritual teacher to receive instruction.

Some common elements in this relationship include:

- The establishment of a teacher/student relationship.

- A formal recognition of this relationship, where the guru accepts the initiate as a shishya and also accepts responsibility for the well-being and progress of the new shishya.

- Gurudakshina, where the shishya gives a gift to the guru as a token of gratitude.

We have with us some distinguished Carnatic musicians who can provide accounts of real life success stories of great personalities who have come up through the guru shishya tradition.

Padmashri Kanyakumari is a renowned Carnatic violinist. Kanyakumari is a native of Vijayanagaram, Andhra Pradesh. She initially learned from I. VijayeswaraRao of the Dwaramschool and later from maestro M. Chandrasekaran under the Govt. of India scholarship. She also had a fruitful long association with Dr. Shrimathi M. L. Vasanthakumari as her stock accompanist.

Kanyakumari is a distinguished soloist and has conducted many innovative recitals featuring 25 violins, 50 violins and recently 100 instruments for the new millennium. In 1988 she set a unique record playing the violin non-stop for 29 hours, at the Padmanabhaswamy temple in Kerala.

Her extensive experience spanning more than 4 decades combined with a sharp acumen and fine sense of creativity has earned her a distinct place.

Dr. S. Sowmya is one of the world's leading exponents of the Carnatic tradition of vocal music. She is reputed for her deeply classical style and for her large repertoire spanning a wide spectrum of composers, including some of the rarest works of the Carnatic Trinity. She is also a passionate promoter and practitioner of *TamizhIsai* – the ancient classical and folk music traditions of Tamil Nadu. Dr. Sowmya is also a fine exponent of the *Saraswati Vina*, one of the world's oldest musical instruments. She is also known for her path-breaking research work in enhancing the tonal stability of the *mridangam*, the pre-eminent percussion instrument in South Indian music.

She was singularly fortunate to be taken under the wings of *Sangita Kalanidhi S. Ramanathan* – exemplary musician and esteemed musicologist. Dr. Sowmya attributes her success and achievements to her gurus and to the bountiful blessings of her beloved Ambal, the Goddess Kamakshi of Kanchipuram.

Padmashri Dr. Murthy, has had an illustrious career as a Mridangist and has accompanied artists of legendary status such as Bharatratna M.S. Subhalakshmi at the U.N. Assembly.

We are proud of our heritage and our culture. We should also cultivate in the younger generation a flair for music and dance. Art foundations and Sabhas should act as a catalyst in creating a bridge between tradition and modernity.

I congratulate the Neelakanta Sivan Cultural academy for its contribution towards promotion of Art and Culture.

I am happy to learn that most of the leading South Indian Musicians have performed under their Banner. The efforts taken by them to organize the Music festival this year deserve a special appreciation from all of us. May the cultural institutions of India grow stronger with time and cement the foundations of our nation to make our people great.

Nandri Vanakkam...

Jai Hind....