

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF
TAMIL NADU AT ILAIYARAAJA 75 ORGANISED BY TAMIL FLM PRODUCERS
COUNCIL AT YMCA GROUND, NANDANAM, CHENNAI
ON 02.02.2019 AT 6.00 P.M**

Anaivarukkum Maalai Vanakkam

Thiru. Isaighani Ilaiyaraaja

Thiru. Vishal,
President, Tamil Film Producers Council

Thiru. S. R. Prabhu
Treasurer, Tamil Film Producers Council

Thiru. S. Kathiresan,
Secretary, Tamil Film Producers Council

Thiru. S. S. Durai Raj,
Secretary, Tamil Film Producers Council

Distinguished Invitees

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am delighted to be participating in the function organized by the Tamil Nadu Film Producers Council on the occasion of the Ilayaraaja '75'.

Thiru. Ilayaraaja who burst out on the Tamil film scene with his musical composition in the Tamil film Annakkili in 1976 is a musical genius.

Born in an ordinary rural setting in Theni district Raja who later become Ilayaraja did not have an easy childhood. His financial condition compelled him to join a travelling musical troupe headed by his elder brother Pavalar Varadarajan, at the age of 14 years. He spent the next ten years performing throughout South India. Thereafter he played on the guitar in a band-for-

hire while simultaneously engaging himself as a session guitarist, for film music composers and directors such as Salil Chowdhury. His big break came with the film producer Panchu Arunachalam who commissioned him to compose the songs and film score for the Tamil film Annakkili. The rest is history.

Ilaiyaraaja's use of native Tamil tunes in his film scores came as a breath of fresh air for the film industry. By his songs Ilaiyaraaja created a pedestal of status for the rural folk tunes of Tamil Nadu. The intelligent mixture of folk music with the classical Tamil film music tradition resulted in Ilaiyaraaja revolutionizing the musical landscape of Tamil Nadu. His experimentation with introducing

western musical sensitivities also added a fresh flavour that was exotic in character but Tamilian in expression. The result was the unfolding of a new trend in film music that gave a sense of pride to the Tamilian about his musical tradition and inheritance. The last 35 years of film music composed by Ilayaraaja have veritably opened up a treasure house of music that will live on forever.

Today the musical maestro stands tall as a giant who has composed over 7000 songs and provided film scores for more than 1000 movies. He has performed in more than 20,000 concerts worldwide. Being the first Asian to compose a full symphony with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in London, Ilayaraaja is known to have written the

entire symphony in just 13 days which has never been done before in the world. He is also a gold medalist in classical guitar from Trinity College of Music, London, through Distance Learning Channel.

He is the recipient of five Indian National Film Awards – three for Best Music Direction and two for Best Background Scores. In 2010, he was awarded the Padma Bhushan, and the Padma Vibhushan in 2018.

Ilaiyaraaja has also forayed into Classical Music. His two non-film albums are explorations in the fusion of Indian and Western classical music. The first album which was composed in 1986 was dedicated to the Carnatic master Tyagaraja. The

second album was performed by the famous flutist Hariprasad Chaurasia with a 50-piece orchestra and takes the conceptual approach that music is a natural phenomenon akin to various forms of air currents (e.g., the wind, breeze, tempest etc).

It is a matter of great satisfaction that one of the outstanding music composers of all times, hailing from Tamil Nadu is being honoured today. A society honours its illustrious sons and daughters when it is in a mood to thank them for the proud position that the society has gained for itself in the world.

Thiru. Ilaiyaraaja by his longstanding contribution to music, particularly film music has won a place in the hearts of millions of people in

India and abroad. Fame and recognition have been offered to him by his countless fans and the Government of India and the State Government. With all this he remains simple and unassuming and still strongly bound to his roots. That is why he has been elevated to the level of a Isaignani.

This function, in fact is not merely an awards function but a celebration of the greatness of Tamil Society.

I should appreciate the efforts of the Tamil Film Producers Council who have chosen to felicitate Thiru. Ilaiyaraaja today. This shows their passion for folk music and their dedication to retaining the natural way of Indian village life alive in the film industry. By honouring Ilaiyaraaja, one

is actually honouring a way of life that is closely aligned to nature. In this context I can only recall the famous words of Shakespeare who said, “If music be the food of love, play on”. I am sure that this function will be an important motivating factor for Ilaiyaraaja to play on. I can assure him that there are millions like us waiting to listen. May his glory and achievements continue for many more years to come.

Nandri Vanakkam.....

Jai Hind....