

# CROSSROADS AND BYROADS:



## *Consonance in Indian Classical Writings and Visual and Performing Arts*

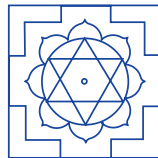


Premeela Gurumurthy | Ambika Kameshwar | Gowri Ramnarayan  
Mukund Dev Sahoo | Madhusudhanan Kalaichelvan | Jaishree Kannan  
Keshav Venkataraghavan | Rajshri Ramakrishna | Shubhashree | Hemalatha  
Vidyuta | Devika | Radha Raghunathan

*Speak on...*

Tamil Paṇṇicai | Carnatic Music | Drupad | Musical Instruments  
Bharatanāṭyam | Drama | Theatre | Terukūttu | Painting  
Sculpture | Temple Architecture

July 19 Friday & 20 Saturday, 2024  
*Seminar Organized by*



**THE ADYAR LIBRARY AND RESEARCH CENTRE**

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The dynamic human mind has been creative in expressing its thoughts through verbal, oral and visual avenues since time immemorial. These expressions are depicted through speech, music, painting, sculpture, dance, drama, literature and so on. Classical Indian literature is noted for the skilful and aesthetic combining of literature, music and drama (Tamil: *iyal-icai-nāṭakam* or Sanskrit: *campu*). A famous instance of the combining of the three genres is seen in the Tamil epic *Cilappatikāram* by Iḷaṅkō Aṭikaḷ. Various musical compositions like ‘sea-song’ (kāṇal-vari), ‘hill-song’ (vēṭṭuva-vari), ‘river-song’ (ārū-vari), ‘swing-song’ (ūsal-vari), ‘ball-song’ (kantuka-vari) and so on are found all over the text.

The artistic and aesthetic interpretations through creativity have given rise to ‘crossroads’ and ‘byroads’ in the interceptions between classical writings and art forms. Thus, we find, that what is found in a text may be enacted either *verbatim* on stage, or the creative artist may show a novelty unseen by the common eye. For instance, the purāṇa-s emerged through oral tradition dating back to the times of Kṛṣṇa (1500 B.C.). The (*āycciyar kuravai*) ‘vaṭavaraiyai mattākki’ (‘making the Northern mountain Meru as the churning rod, the serpent Vāsuki as the rope to churn ...’) of the ‘Maturai-kāṇṭam’ in *Cilappatikāram* (5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> cent. A.D.) is drawn from many episodes in the Vaiṣṇava purāṇa-s, particularly the *Bhāgavata*-purāṇa. And, the *āycciyar kuravai* ‘vaṭavaraiyai mattākki vācukiyai nāṇākki ...’ has become immortal in the twentieth century, thanks to the soulful rendering by the great and incomparable Smt. M.S. Subbulakshmi. So much so, that most people think that ‘vaṭavaraiyai mattākki vācukiyai nāṇākki ...’ is a Carnatic song in Tamil and are not aware of its occurrence in the ‘Maturai-kāṇṭam’ in *Cilappatikāram*, with origins in the purāṇa-s. Similar is the case of ‘Invocation to Mother Tamil’ (*tamiḷ-ṭ tāy vāḷttu*) from Sundaram Pillai’s invocation to his drama *Manōṇmaṇīyam* (19<sup>th</sup> century) and set to tune by M.S. Viswanathan (20<sup>th</sup> century) and regularly sung after the National anthem at the beginning of official functions in Tamilnadu. Also, not many know that it is but an excerpt and not the whole poem by Sundaram Pillai.

Generally, a good story or plot in writing gets portrayed as a musical rendering or is performed on stage or screen. As a result, each medium of expression has evolved its own grammar and rules. Extending further, every school and sub-school of literature, music, drama, painting or sculpture adhere to specific themes, forms and methods. So, a lay person senses the broad difference between the South Indian Carnatic music and the North Indian Hindustani music, while a person learned in music discerns the nuances which mark the two forms. If the Southern Carnatic music and

## CROSSROADS AND BYROADS:

### Consonance in Indian Classical Writings and Visual and Performing Arts

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Bharatanāṭya has various sub-schools termed as ‘bāṇi-s,’ the North Indian Hindustani music and dance forms like Kathak branched into sub-schools called ‘gharāna-s.’ So too with the classical forms of drama and folk-theatre, classical dance and folk-dance, classical painting or folk forms of painting, each of which is marked by geographical and linguistic flavours.

Scenes or themes from a text can be re-created on stage without any modifications, or a creative artist may choose to make slight modifications or complete changes to the original script. For instance, themes from the Indian Vaiṣṇavite mythology find distinct regional expressions in the cloth-based scroll paintings called *Paṭṭacitra* of the eastern states like Odisha and West Bengal, while the tribal art of the Gōṇḍṣ of Madhya Pradesh depicts motifs from their culture and love for nature. These instances can be seen as faithful ‘transportations’ of the original themes. M.S. Subbulakshmi’s rendering of *āycciyar kuravai* from *Cilappatikāram* is a classic case of ‘transportation.’

On the other hand, Kalidāsa’s play *Abhijñāna-śākuntala* can be seen as a ‘transformation’ of the Śākuntala-episode in *Mahabhārata*. And, Kalidāsa’s *Śākuntala* enjoys greater popularity than the Śākuntala-episode featuring in the original text of the *Mahabhārata*. The reason could be that the common man enjoys a ‘feel-good’-‘justice done’-experience on seeing Śākuntala’s and her son Bharata’s uniting with her long-lost husband Duṣyanta in Kalidāsa’s play, in comparison to the Śākuntala’s story in the *Mahabhārata* which does not mention if there was a reunion or not at all.

Against this, poet Dinakar’s Hindi poem *Kōnārk* is an imaginary tragic story inspired by the architectural marvel of the Konarak temple in Orissa. A reader may choose to look upon this poem either as a ‘transformation’ or ‘transgression.’

The two-day seminar to be held by the Adyar Library and Research Centre on ‘Crossroads and Byroads...’ aims to explore such consonances between Indian classical literature and their portrayal through the various art forms. In doing so, the seminar intends to focus on ‘Transportations, Transformations and Transgressions between Text and Stage.’

— Radha Raghunathan  
Director and Gen. Editor  
The Adyar Library and Research Centre

## **CROSSROADS AND BYROADS:**

### **Consonance in Indian Classical Writings and Visual and Performing Arts**

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**Mr Tim Boyd** (1953–) has been serving as international President of the Theosophical Society Adyar since April of 2014. He was born in New York City and lived there for seventeen years until he left to attend Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. From there he transferred to the University of Chicago, where he was an honors graduate with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Public Affairs. He joined the Theosophical Society in America in 1974. Together with Bill Lawrence, a TS member and mentor, and others he founded a Theosophical spiritual community in Chicago's inner city. The group held classes on the Ageless Wisdom, meditation, and healing. They worked with at-risk and disadvantaged youth, transformed vacant lots into award-winning organic food gardens, and placed beehives on the roofs of local buildings. The group formed a business (Royal Associates) that initially focused on reclaiming and renovating deteriorating residential buildings in their area, creating housing for low- and middle-income families. Their work helped stabilize neighbourhoods through the training and employment of local youth and the creation of affordable homes for area residents.

In 1988 Tim became a national lecturer for the TS in America. From 1996 to 2000 he worked in hospice services as a volunteer in a team that involved doctors, social workers, and nurses. In 2007 he became president of the Theosophical Order of Service (TOS) USA, and in 2011 was elected President of the TS in America. Tim's involvement with the Theosophical Order of Service and the Chushul orphanage in Tibet led to an audience with the Dalai Lama, which resulted in the TS in America sponsoring his visit to Chicago in July of 2011 — a two-

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day event attended by 10,000 people. The event raised \$400,000, all of which was donated to educational projects aiding Tibetan communities worldwide.

In 2014 Tim was re-elected as TS in America President and also elected President of the Theosophical Society Adyar. He currently shares his time between the headquarters of the TS Adyar in Chennai, India, and his home in Chicago, Illinois, USA, where he lives with his wife, Lily, and daughter, Angelique.

## CROSSROADS AND BYROADS:

### Consonance in Indian Classical Writings and Visual and Performing Arts

Seminar organized by ALRC — July 19 Friday & 20 Saturday, 2024

#### A Chronological Analysis on Paṇṇicai in Tamil Music Tradition

— Keynote Speech by Dr. Premeela Gurumurthy

#### Abstract

*“pann sumantha pāḍal parisu paḍaitaruḷum...”*

The above opening line of the Tiruvācaka lyric means, that this song which carries the pann, gives one an award along with divine blessings.

Tamil and Sanskrit, are among the ten oldest languages, a pride indeed. In the Tamil tradition, with regard to *Paṇṇicai*, from the time of *Tolkāppiyam*, works of the Saṅgam period, like *Cilapadikāram*, *Eṭṭutokai*, *Pattupāṭṭu*, *Saiva Paṇṇiru Tirumurai*, the *Nālāyira Divya Prabandham* and *Pañcamarabu* along with the singing tradition of the Ōduvārs and the music of the *Nālāyira Divya Prabandham* will be analysed in this paper.

Dr. Premeela’s presentation, will focus on the chronological growth, and an analytical study of the *Paṇṇicai* down the ages.

## CROSSROADS AND BYROADS:

### Consonance in Indian Classical Writings and Visual and Performing Arts

Seminar organized by ALRC — July 19 Friday & 20 Saturday, 2024



#### Profile

**Prof. Dr. Premeela** Gurumurthy joined Queen Mary's College, Chennai, graduated in Indian Music winning the prize for practical music at the convocation of the University of Madras in November 1974.

She holds an M.A. in Indian Philosophy, M.A. in Indian Music, Ph.D. in "Kathākālakshepa: A Study." She learnt to perform this art also from veterans like Sri. Embar Vijayaraghavacharyar and Smt. C. Bannibai, University of Madras.

Dr. Premeela joined the Department of Indian Music, University of Madras, as a lecturer in 1984. She became a Reader, rose as Professor & Head of the Department of Music, University of Madras. She was appointed by the Governor of Tamilnadu as Syndicate Member at the University of Madras during 2007–2010.

Dr. Premeela's teaching and research experience spans over thirty years. During her tenure at the University, Dr. Premeela guided 20 Ph.D and 50 M.Phil candidates.

She has published at least 100 articles. Her publications include *Kathakalakshhepa: A Study*, University of Madras; *Nellai tanda isai maṇikaḷ* (Tamil), Narada Gana Sabha Publication; *Gopalakrishna Bharathi* (Tamil), Delhi Sahitya Akademi Publication; *Kalā Tapasvī Padmashri* Dr. Vishnu Sridhara Wakankar translated from Kanada into English and Tamil.

Dr. Premeela Gurumurthy has received many recognitions and honours. Notable among them are: Isai Kalai Chelvar from Ramalingar Pani Mandram, Acharya Choodamani from Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, Life-time Achievement Award from The Indian Fine Arts Society, Musicologist award The Music Academy, Acharya Ratnakara Award at The Cleveland Thyagaraja Aaradhana Festival, The Sangeet Natak Akademi from the President of India being one among recipients for 2022 in the category for scholarship in Fine Arts on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March 2024.

## CROSSROADS AND BYROADS:

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#### ‘The Transformative Power of Natya’

— by Dr. Ambika Kameshwar

#### Abstract

Development is a continuous, qualitative process from birth to death. It involves acquiring skills to function optimally, such as moving, walking, talking, socializing, and problem-solving. Nāṭya, or Indian Theatre, represents life’s experiences and emotions, providing a framework for teaching life skills. *The Nāṭya Śāstra*, an ancient treatise by Bharata, underlines its comprehensive nature.

Nāṭya enables individuals to explore their emotions and capacities non-threateningly and enjoyably. It facilitates personal growth, identifying strengths, and overcoming weaknesses. Theatre arts—comprising dance, music, drama, and crafts—holistically develop an individual’s potential. Dance enhances mobility and body language; music and drama improve verbal skills and emotional well-being; arts and crafts foster aesthetic sense and fine motor skills.

Nāṭya employs *abhinaya*, the representation of emotions and ideas through physical (āṅgika), verbal (vācika), ornamental (āhārya), and temperamental (sātvika) modes. This multifaceted approach makes Nāṭya a guideline for appropriate behaviour in various life situations.

For children with disabilities, Nāṭya provides stimulating, structured activities tailored to individual needs. It helps enhance movement skills, language, communication, social skills, and emotional expression. Through rhythmic movement, dialogue repetition, and role-playing, children learn and develop in a fun, non-threatening environment.

Dr. Ambika presents how Nāṭya stands as a timeless methodology, uniting and empowering individuals across boundaries, promoting holistic development and personal transformation.

## CROSSROADS AND BYROADS:

### Consonance in Indian Classical Writings and Visual and Performing Arts

Seminar organized by ALRC — July 19 Friday & 20 Saturday, 2024



#### Profile

**Dr. Ambika Kameshwar** is a renowned danseuse, vocalist, scholar, and educator recognized globally. She has a career spanning over 50 years in dance, music, and traditional Indian Dance Theatre, and over 40 years in teaching. She is the Founder-Director of RASA — Ramana Sunritya Aalaya.

Dr. Ambika has choreographed and composed music for more than 60 dance theatre productions and numerous complete Bharatanāṭyam *Mārgam*-s. She is known for her 'pāṭṭu class' on Television.

With a PhD in Nāṭyābhinaya, Dr. Ambika holds a Post-doctoral Fellowship on the Application of Nāṭya as a holistic developmental tool. This is her pioneering work, which she has successfully applied on people with differing abilities for the past four decades plus.

Dr. Ambika guides PhD scholars in dance and music, and has served on advisory boards like those of Prasar Bharti, South Zone Cultural Centre and Kalakshetra. Her accolades include 'For the Sake of Honour' Rotary Award, Bharata Kala Ratna, Stree Ratna, Acharya Choodamani, and the Kalaimamani Award (2004) and Sirappu Kalaimamani Award (2019) from the Government of Tamil Nadu State.

## CROSSROADS AND BYROADS:

### Consonance in Indian Classical Writings and Visual and Performing Arts

Seminar organized by ALRC — July 19 Friday & 20 Saturday, 2024

#### Bringing Vyasa's *Sarpa-yajña* to the Modern Stage

— Dr. Gowri Ramnarayan

##### Abstract

*The Mahabharata* depicts a snake sacrifice, a saga of cyclical revenge spanning four generations. The poet Arun Kolatkar recreates that chilling myth in English as *Sarpa Satra* (Snake Sacrifice), to mirror our times. My play *Sarpa Sūtra* juxtaposes these two texts in Sanskrit (sung) and English (spoken) to a stage performance combining dialogue, dance, music and martial arts movements. The Sanskrit text underscores a dhārmic concept — When 'sacrifice' becomes butchery, how can the individual take a stand against violence? The English text unfolds a contemporary account of ecocide and ethnic cleansing in the modern world. The two main characters in Dr. Gowri's play are Janamējaya, the king who wants to wipe out the entire species of snakes because a snake had killed his father; and Jaratkaru, a snake woman who is shortly to burn as the victim of Janamējaya's violence.

Theatre being a powerful tool for exploring the issues of the urgent present, Dr. Gowri's play raise several questions through the voice of Jaratkaru, the victim. — (1) Since all lives on planet earth are interdependent and interconnected, does not violence affect the perpetrator as well as the victim? (2) If violence is met with violence, can the cycle ever be cut off? (3) Can peaceful resistance stop aggression? (4) And, if the violence does not end, can humanity survive at all? (5) How does one take personal responsibility for the ills of the world?

Dr. Gowri's paper will focus on the methods and techniques of theatre craft in bringing the sarpa-yajña to the stage and also examine the issues underscored by the poets, ancient and modern, as well as in the play.

## CROSSROADS AND BYROADS:

### Consonance in Indian Classical Writings and Visual and Performing Arts

Seminar organized by ALRC — July 19 Friday & 20 Saturday, 2024



#### Profile

**Dr. Gowri Ramnarayan** is a journalist, formerly Deputy Editor, *The Hindu*, vocal accompanist to the none other than the well-known nightingale of India, Carnatic musician MS Subbulakshmi, artistic director and in house playwright at Just Us Repertory with 32 theatre works. Her productions have toured in the UK, the US and South Asia. She has authored children's books, a biography of M.S. Subbulakshmi and *Dark Horse*, a collection of her plays. Her translations include two plays by the Marathi playwright Vijay Tendulkar, as well as *Kalki Krishnamurthy: His Life and Times* (Kalki Biography Project), and Kalki's fiction — *Selected Short Stories* (Penguin), *The Sound of the Waves* (Hachette India), *Ponniyin Selvan* (to be published by Penguin).

Dr. Gowri served as Fipresci Jury member at international film festivals. She is Chairperson, Rukmini Devi Arundale Trust, and Adjunct Faculty, Asian College of Journalism, Chennai. Awards received by her include *Kala Vidya Nidhi* (Indian Fine Arts Association San Diego) and *Nataka Choodamani* (Sri Krishnagana Sabha, Chennai).

**Dr. Gowri Ramnarayan feels privileged to be guided in her doctoral studies by Dr Kunjunni Raja at the Adyar Library and Research Centre. And, ALRC is equally privileged to have our first alumnus Dr. Gowri Ramnarayan, to deliver a very interesting and thought-provoking paper in this seminar.**

## CROSSROADS AND BYROADS:

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#### Proximity and Divergence of Dhrupad Tradition: An Analysis from *Sangeet Ratnākar* and Its Relationship with the Bhakti Tradition, Focusing on ‘Dev-Vani’ in Dhrupad Tradition

— Pandit Mukund Dev Sahoo

#### Abstract

Scriptures are the means through which any tradition, culture, or style is preserved and handed down from generation to generation. Similarly, Indian classical music is fundamentally based on scriptures. Whether or not this music adheres entirely to the scriptures, we have been able to listen to and learn from it up to the present day.

In a constantly changing world, the flow of change has continued through the ages, from the Satya Yuga, Trēta Yuga, and Dvāpara Yuga to the present Kali Yuga. These changes are known to us through the scriptures. Hence, in our Sanskrit scriptures, change is linked to ‘dhruva,’ meaning stability and continuity. Despite being influenced by many civilizations, this musical style has maintained its existence in society to this day. It is still heard and learned through different gharanas. Many esteemed musicians believe that this musical style is connected to the scriptures. Among the ancient musical scriptures, *Sangeet Ratnākar* by Shri Sarang Dev is considered a great text. It is crucial to research and analyse how closely Drupad is connected to or has diverged from this scripture. Based on his long years of practice in Drupad music and various other styles, and what he has learned from his gurus, Pandit Sahoo attempts to present his findings based on scriptures.

In the Drupad tradition, devotion is the primary element, which is why this music was sung in temples. Today, only a few scholars begin with praise in their initial *ālāp*, and later perform with meaningless words. Observing the decline in the popularity of the current Drupad method of singing, it is apparent that somewhere, the classical rules of Drupad have been violated. This has weakened devotion, turning music into a means of entertainment. Due to this confusion, this great tradition is on the verge of extinction, limited to only a select group.

To uncover the reasons behind this, Pandit Mukund Dev dedicated his entire life, reaching a conclusion. Based on this conclusion, he has re-evaluated an ancient tradition and the scriptures to revive a new tradition. Pandit Mukund Dev Sahoo’s presentation will focus on the origin of the Dhrupad style, ‘Dev-Vani’ and its relationship with the scriptures.

## CROSSROADS AND BYROADS:

### Consonance in Indian Classical Writings and Visual and Performing Arts

Seminar organized by ALRC — July 19 Friday & 20 Saturday, 2024



#### Profile

**Pandit Mukund Dev Sahoo** is an expert in Drupad style of Hindustani music. He is known for his musical Mastery and spiritual depth of the art. His skill in this form of Indian classical music merges artistic brilliance with a quest for knowledge. Raised in Odisha and guided by his father, Pt. Mukund Dev pursued formal training in Hindustani classical music, earning bachelor's and master's degrees. He mastered the Gwalior and Agra styles of Khayal and trained in Dagar Vani Drupad under the Padma Shri Gundecha Brothers.

Pt. Mukund Dev's spiritual journey led to the creation of 'Deva Vani Dhrupad,' which intertwines Drupad music with the divine mantra "Om Hari Anant Narayan Tarana Tarana Tvam.' His albums *Transcendental Sound of the Himalayas* and *Nectar of Dhrupad Music* guide listeners to ethereal realms where melodies harmonize with divine sentiments.

Through his other creation 'Naad Yoga,' Pt. Mukund Dev explores sound, vibration, and consciousness, emphasizing unity and transcendence. As a performer, poet, composer, and dedicated teacher, he enriches the tradition of Indian classical music, inspiring future generations while continuing his own scholarly pursuits.

## CROSSROADS AND BYROADS:

### Consonance in Indian Classical Writings and Visual and Performing Arts

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#### Architecture of Performance Spaces – Iḷanko's Insight

— Madhusudhanan Kalaichelvan

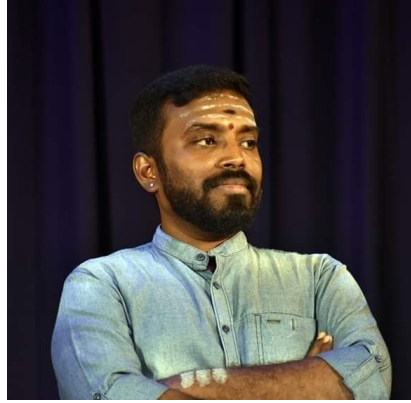
##### Abstract

The experience of performing art-forms like choir, music, dance and theatre, for the audience, is enhanced when performed in spaces that are architecturally well laid. Several ancient cultures had highly technical performance spaces like amphi-theatres with levelled seating facilities, stage height and entry-exit points designed to offer the audience the best experience. Popular art-forms like music and dance have been well patronized by ancient Tamils. Several native traditions and highly classical versions of music, dance and theatre have been discussed in detail in the Saṅgam and post-Saṅgam works. Each of them had their own space constraints where they were performed too. From street theatres to well-designed auditoriums, all existed from the ancient past. Of the several references on this subject, the most detailed is given by Iḷaṅkō Aṭikaḷ gives us in his post-Saṅgam work, *Cilappadhikāram*. This grand opera with its second female lead, Madhavi, being a dancer herself, offers several occasions where music and dance, and the places where they were practiced and performed are discussed. The chapter on Madhavi's first stage appearance, the 'araṅkētra kāthai,' gives us synoptic details on stage design, stage management, curtains, entry-exit points, seating arrangements, performer-audience connect and lighting aspects too. These insights given by Iḷaṅkō, though, technologically outdated, are technically fully valid to this time. Prof. Madhusudana's aims at understanding the architectural parameters discussed by Iḷanko and their present-day context.

## CROSSROADS AND BYROADS:

### Consonance in Indian Classical Writings and Visual and Performing Arts

Seminar organized by ALRC — July 19 Friday & 20 Saturday, 2024



#### Profile

**Pandit Madhusudhanan Kalaichelvan**, an architecture graduate and a gold medallist in his Post-graduation, specializes in conservation and architectural research. He has been an academic for around 14 years now, mentoring students of popular schools of architecture. He is an active heritage enthusiast and his contributions have earned him several awards and accolades. He is a faculty of Śaiva Siddhānta at the Dharumapuram Adheenam and has been awarded the statuses of Adheena Pulavar (2023) and Saiva Tamizh Arignar (2022) by his ācārya Sri Dharumapuram Adheenam. He is the youngest recipient of the coveted Vedavalli memorial award for outstanding service by a young achiever in the field of South Indian heritage (2018). He is the first recipient of Prof. Swaminathan Award (2020) for his service in the field of heritage and culture. He received the title, ‘Ilakkiya Chemmal’ (2019), recognizing his mastery of Tamil literature (2019). He is well-versed in the fields of art, architecture, heritage, cultural studies, and vernacular practices. He is also a popular speaker on a wide range of topics associated with heritage, religion, culture, music temple, temple arts, and literature. He served as a member (in the capacity of an architect) in the State Level Heritage Committee constituted by the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments from 2018 – 2022. Madhusudhanan has been nominated as a member of the academic council of Tamil Nadu Dr. J. Jayalalitha Music and Fine Arts University. He has been writing columns in popular print media covering subjects like epigraphy, conservation, not so popular temples and archaeology. Through his popular initiative RATHAM – Road Access to Temples, Heritage And Monuments, he curates and conducts tours to places of architectural and cultural heritage since 2012. He currently pursues his doctoral research on ‘Temple Town Planning in Tamil Nadu.’

## CROSSROADS AND BYROADS:

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#### Impact of Bhakti on Indian Music

— Ms. Jaishree Kannan

##### Abstract

Bhakti forms an important role in India's religious and cultural traditions. It is a devotional surrender to supreme God for attaining salvation or mōkṣa. Bhakti has evolved to define a way of life. How did the Bhakti movement start? What were the main principles of Bhakti movement? What were the effects of the Bhakti movement? And, what were the causes, and so on? These topics were discussed over time. The Bhakti movement started in Southern India around the 7th and the 10th century. This movement spread to the north centuries later in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The Bhakti movement was a socio-cultural, religious and mass movement. Bhakti emerged as a religious doctrine into a popular movement based on religious equality and also as a social participation. It brought about religious reforms to all strata of society by adopting the method of bhakti to achieve salvation. By making God more accessible, the bhakti movement had a significant impact on society. The local languages were used so that the message reached the masses. This movement was inspired by many poet-saints, who championed a wide range of philosophical positions. In the South India, saints like Al̥vārs and Nāyanmārs were propagating bhakti. In North India, Varanasi particularly became a centre of new cultural awakening. Poets of vernacular languages like Ramānanda, Kabir, Tulsidās and Ravidās resided in Varanasi and so did Vallabhācārya. There were other poets from other areas too like Mīra Bai of Chittoor (Rajasthan) and Sūrdas.

There are various forms of bhakti. Adding a musical presentation of Tyagaraja's and Purandara Dāsa's kritis as examples, Ms. Jaishree will focus on the 'nine forms of devotion, *Navavidha Bhakti*.

## **CROSSROADS AND BYROADS:**

### **Consonance in Indian Classical Writings and Visual and Performing Arts**

Seminar organized by ALRC — July 19 Friday & 20 Saturday, 2024



#### **Profile**

**Ms. Jaishree Kannan** did her schooling at Besant Theosophical High School. She holds a degree of Bachelor of Arts with Indian Music as main subject and a Master's degree in Indian Philosophy. She was teaching in a school, and now teaches chanting and Carnatic Music. She has been presenting musical presentations combining Music and Theosophical subjects.

Ms. Jaishree has been working in the Adyar Library and Research Centre for nearly 2 1/2 decades. She has served as the Archivist In-charge of Surendra Narayan Library of the Theosophical Society and is the Librarian of ALRC since January 2023.

## **CROSSROADS AND BYROADS:**

### **Consonance in Indian Classical Writings and Visual and Performing Arts**

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#### **‘The Visuals inspired by our Epics — Understanding beyond the Text’**

— Sri. Keshav Venkataraghavan

#### **Abstract**

We have plenty of visuals from the epics (Itihāsa-s and Purāṇas) in painting, music, sculpture, dance or drama - throughout the east. Our glorious epic literature of Itihāsa-s and Purāṇas has endured the test of time, and has been interpreted and reinterpreted in innumerable ways.

What do these narratives contain? How relevant are they for our contemporary living? Does the rasa of the literature impact us at all? Why is story-telling chosen as the most simple way to communicate to the people? And why is it necessary that we try to reinvent the idea in today’s context?

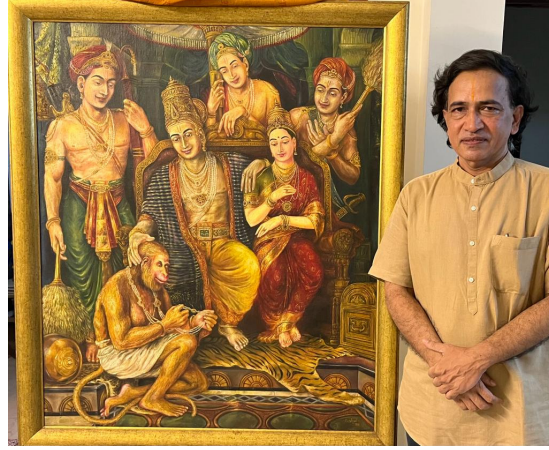
These are the questions which made Sri. Keshav Venkataraghavan get into painting from the epics under the broad theme of Kṛṣṇa. He will be discussing this amazing journey, the beauty of the thoughts communicated through stories, poetry, music, dance and drama, the firm conviction of the seers who have discussed life as is, and the many paths to wisdom, and also the understanding that whichever path one takes, it leads one to the same truth.

To reveal the nuances and ideas in the epics and various other compositions, Sri. Keshav will discuss through a visual presentation of some of his works.

## CROSSROADS AND BYROADS:

### Consonance in Indian Classical Writings and Visual and Performing Arts

Seminar organized by ALRC — July 19 Friday & 20 Saturday, 2024



#### Profile

**Sri. Keshav Venkataraghavan** is a renowned painter and cartoonist. Born in Bangalore in 1961, he did his schooling in Hyderabad and came to Chennai, then known as Madras, in 1977. Sri. Keshav has been drawing since childhood. In the 1970s he was inspired by the works of Raja Ravi Varma and the elegant drawings of Sri. S Rajam. In 1978, he learnt oil-painting, and began to study the works of the masters from the Renaissance and of the Impressionist masters and others. Also, he was greatly inspired by the Indian contemporary masters like Abanindranath Tagore, Nandalal Bose and Ganesh Pyne. In 1983, Sri. Keshav entered the world of cartooning through Ananda Vikatan. Later he joined *The Hindu* as Editorial cartoonist in 1987. In 2002, he studied art from our Indian contemporary artists. The writings of Sri. Ananda Coomaraswamy, Stella Kramrisch and C. Sivaramamurthy inspired him into the fascinating world of Indian Art, leading him to Krishna. So, after about three decades with *The Hindu*, quit cartooning in 2019 to devote full-time to painting. Sri. Keshav held two one-man shows on the theme of Krishna in 2006, one in Chennai and another in Bangalore. He was part of a group show titled 'Divine Deities' held in Delhi in 2015 with Abhishek Singh and two others. Around 2016, he opened an e-commerce website [Krishnafortoday.com](http://Krishnafortoday.com) where he posts his works frequently, besides posting on other social media platforms like Twitter, Blog, Facebook, and Instagram.

## CROSSROADS AND BYROADS:

### Consonance in Indian Classical Writings and Visual and Performing Arts

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#### Musical Forms in Carnatic Music

— Dr Rajshri Ramakrishna

##### Abstract

The historical perspective of Carnatic music spans from ancient to medieval periods, beginning with *Sāmagāna*, the Vedic chant, and evolving through various forms like *Gāndharva*, *Nāṭya*, and *Caturdaṇḍī*.

*Sāmagāna*, rooted in Vedic traditions, laid the foundation for the subsequent musical developments.

Next is *Gāndharva*, a sophisticated system of art music emphasizing melodic structures, extensively described in ancient treatises. *Nāṭya* or drama incorporated music with performers classified into three groups or *kutapa*-s: *Tata-kutapa*-s (singers and string/wind instrument players), *Avanaddha-kutapa*-s (percussion players), and *Nāṭya-kutapa*-s (actors), highlighting the interdisciplinary nature of Indian performing arts.

'*Vādyā*' specifically refers to percussion instruments, distinguishing them from melodic instruments. Melodic forms, like *gāna* or *gāndharva*, exclude syllabic forms created by drums. In the medieval period, forms like *Gītaka*, *Dhruvā-gāna*, and *Nirgīta* emerged, each with unique characteristics and functions, often used in conjunction with dance (*Nṛtta*). *Dēśī* *Gāndharva*, *Dēśī* *Gāna* forms, and *Prabandha*-s reflect regional variations and the evolving nature of musical forms.

The next phase involves the transition to current musical forms in practice: *Gīta*, *Varṇa*, *Kīrtana*, and others.

Dr. Rajshri's paper focuses on these forms of Carnatic music which evolved over time.

## **CROSSROADS AND BYROADS:**

### **Consonance in Indian Classical Writings and Visual and Performing Arts**

Seminar organized by ALRC — July 19 Friday & 20 Saturday, 2024



#### **Profile**

**Dr. Rajshri Ramakrishna** is a dedicated disciple of Kalaimamani Vina Rajeswari Padmanabhan, Sangita Kala Acharya Sri. P.S. Narayanaswamy, and Sangita Kala Acharya Smt. Suguna Varadachariar. Her PhD research was conducted under the guidance of Dr. S.A.K. Durga.

Dr. Rajshri has contributed to academia with papers, articles, and projects for UGC and All India Radio. Under her guidance, seven scholars have been awarded PhD degrees from the University of Madras.

Dr. Rajshri Ramakrishna currently serves as Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Indian Music, University of Madras.

## **CROSSROADS AND BYROADS:**

### **Consonance in Indian Classical Writings and Visual and Performing Arts**

Seminar organized by ALRC — July 19 Friday & 20 Saturday, 2024

#### **Indian Musical Instruments**

— Dr. M Subhasree

#### **Abstract**

Indian Music system is endowed with a rich tradition of significant concepts that is portrayed through both vocal and instrumental music. The wide range of musical instruments have contributed largely to the historical development of Indian Music. The origin of musical instruments can be traced through the textual sources that have documented the life of early civilization. The early inhabitants initially used their hands to clap and tap which served as an accompaniment to their raw music. The sounds of the rattles, sounds produced by tying strings or guts across a piece of hollow wood were part of the musical life of the early primitive men.

The general classification of musical instruments such as Stringed, Wind, and Percussion is a broad classification branches out to different types based on various parameters such as structure, construction, utility, purpose, genre of music and so on. The early textual sources such as Saṅgam literary works in Tamil, treatises such as Nāṭya-śāstra, *Cilappadigāram* and other source texts have dedicated segments to the description of musical instruments. Apart from the written sources, the sculptures, paintings, archaeological evidences also serve as main pedestals for the study of the evolution of musical instruments.

As music was a major part of the life of common man, the musical instruments were also equally a part of the lives of humankind both for entertainment and professional pursuits. There were exclusive instruments which were a part of the rituals associated with each of the regional domestic communities across the nation.

Apart from the indigenous musical instruments, there have also been adaptations from other parts of the world, with certain modifications suiting to Indian music system contributing to the legacy of Indian music.

Dr. Subhasree will give glimpses of the rich tradition of Indian musical instruments.

## **CROSSROADS AND BYROADS:**

### **Consonance in Indian Classical Writings and Visual and Performing Arts**

Seminar organized by ALRC — July 19 Friday & 20 Saturday, 2024



#### **Profile**

**Dr. M Subhasree** received vocal training from Smt Rajalakshmi Srinivasan. She pursued her doctoral research under the guidance of Prof. Dr. Premeela Gurumurthy. She has been providing vocal support for Bharatanatyam performances of various gurus for the past 17 years. She has presented various papers in seminars and conferences. Dr. Subhasree is Assistant Professor in the Department of Indian Music, University of Madras for the past ten years, and a Research Supervisor at the department guiding PhD research scholars

## CROSSROADS AND BYROADS:

### Consonance in Indian Classical Writings and Visual and Performing Arts

Seminar organized by ALRC — July 19 Friday & 20 Saturday, 2024

**The *Tāla*-s handled in the South Indian musical forms of the modern period.**

— Dr. R. Hemalatha

#### Abstract

In the history of South Indian Music, many musical forms have been handled by the composers during different periods. During the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the treatises speak about ‘caturdaṇḍī’ or the four elements of Music namely gīta, ālāpa, ṭhāya and prabandha, of which the gīta and prabandha are rendered with rhythmic beat (tāla). The *Svaramēḷa-kalānidhi* of Rāmāmātya, classifies the rāga-s on the basis of their suitability to render the caturdaṇḍī. A later treatise, the *Caturdaṇḍī-prakāśikā* of Vēṅkaṭamakhī, has chapters on ālāpa, ṭhāya, gīta and prabandha, which emphasise the importance of the caturdaṇḍī forms. In the chapter on gīta-s, it is seen that the *sālagasūḍa* gīta-s are explained in terms of the tāla-s in which they are set. For instance, some of the types of sālagasūḍa gīta-s are *dhruva*, *maṭṭha*, *aṭṭha* and *nihsāruka*, which are based on the names of the tāla-s.

During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the musical forms *varṇa* and *kīrtana* came into existence and it is seen that many of the tāla-s mentioned in the treatises are not handled in these musical forms.

Dr. Hemalatha’s presentation proposes to study the tāla-s handled in the South Indian musical forms pertaining to the modern period and to see if any reason could be attributed to this change.

#### Profile



**Dr. R. Hemalatha** completed her doctorate in Music from the University of Madras in the year 2002. She is also a performing violinist and a ‘TOP’ ranking artiste of All India Radio. She has presented papers in many seminars and published many articles. Dr. Hemalatha serving as an Assistant Professor at the Department of Indian Music, University of Madras.

## CROSSROADS AND BYROADS:

### Consonance in Indian Classical Writings and Visual and Performing Arts

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#### Yōgāsanas in Sculpture

— Dr. Vidyuta K.

##### Abstract

According to Patañjali, a fixed and comfortable posture is known as *āsana*. The *yōgāsanas* have been prevalent in practice for over five thousand years. The earliest reference to them is found in certain seals of the Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa times. Later they have been represented visually through iconography and paintings.

The *āsana* in the iconographical sense refers to the particular posture and position assumed by the deities, sculpturally represented. Also, the symbolism of the *āsana* in the representation of the divine images is illustrative of the fact that all forms of Hindu worship are governed by the practical side of Yōga philosophy.

Dr. Vidyuta's paper will throw light on the different *yōgāsanas* that are depicted in the sculptures of the deities and their yōgic significance.

##### Profile

**Dr. K. Vidyuta** (B.Sc. Mathematics; M.A., M.Phil., and Ph. D. Sanskrit) is currently working as Assistant Professor at the Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute, Chennai. She has presented research papers in many National and International Seminars and Conferences in India and abroad, including the 16<sup>th</sup> World Sanskrit Conference, held at Bangkok in June 2015. Her specialization includes Temple Architecture, Geography, Sanskrit Literature, Yōga, and Ancient Indian Mathematics. She has published many research articles



in leading journals and magazines on varied topics. Her publication includes “*Devaprāsāda as in Viśvakarma Vāstuśāstra (Study On Temple Architecture)*”, by Karnataka Historical Research Society, Dharwad and she has co-edited “*Śivasvarodaya*”, published by the KSRI, Chennai. Her papers have received “Best Paper” Award from the Infinity Foundation (2017) and Sanskrit Academy (Osmania University) (2021). She is presently working on projects related to Ancient Indian Architecture and Iconography

## CROSSROADS AND BYROADS:

### Consonance in Indian Classical Writings and Visual and Performing Arts

Seminar organized by ALRC — July 19 Friday & 20 Saturday, 2024

#### Performed Text and Built Text

— Dr. V.R. Devika

#### Abstract

Among the large corpus of Hindu religious texts, Vedas, Vedāṅgas, Smṛtis, Purāṇas, Dharma-śāstras and Itihāsas, Itihāsa consists of the two major epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. The itihāsas or the epics are not part of the śruti tradition. They are part of the smṛti tradition and they have been recited, heard, memorized and passed down through generations.

Does a smṛti tradition such as the *Mahābhārata* survive in isolation? Do not religious literature impact sculptures and temples? The great monuments at Mamallapuram (earlier known as Mahabalipuram) seem to be ‘built text’ of the performing and ritualistic traditions of the total Tamil theatre of *terukkūttu* or *kaṭṭaikkūttu* prevailing in the area for thousands of years. A vibrant and multileveled performance of a living *Mahābhārata* is celebrated as a performance-interpretation in hundreds of villages around Mamallapuram. The interconnectedness of the *Mahābhārata* text and the rituals of the *kūttu* are well known. This presentation would like to go further and look at the monuments at Mamallapuram as sculpted text. Did Dēvī Māhātmyam verses inspire the great sculptural panel of Mahiṣāsura-mardini? Did Arjuna’s penance episode of the *kūttu* tradition inspire the great *bas relief*? The monuments seem to be the visual presentation of a text.

Dr. Devika will explore with us such interconnections of the monuments of Mamallapuram with the total theatre of Tamils, the *terukkūttu* and *Dēvī Māhātmya*, and so on.

## CROSSROADS AND BYROADS:

### Consonance in Indian Classical Writings and Visual and Performing Arts

Seminar organized by ALRC — July 19 Friday & 20 Saturday, 2024



#### Profile

**Dr. V. R. Devika** is the founder and managing trustee of The Aseema Trust — a nonprofit organization for linking traditional performing arts and education and also Mahatma Gandhi and education. She is on the academic council of TNJJ Music and Fine arts University. Trained in Bharatanatyam classical dance under the Dhananjayans, Dr. Devika has researched and promoted folk forms. The monograph she authored, *Muthulakshmi Reddy: A trailblazer in Surgery and Women's Rights*, published by Niyogi books won the South Asia Laadli Media award 2023 for non-fiction. Widely traveled around the world for conferences and lectures, Dr. Devika's latest book is on Rukmini Devi Arundale.

## CROSSROADS AND BYROADS:

### Consonance in Indian Classical Writings and Visual and Performing Arts

Seminar organized by ALRC — July 19 Friday & 20 Saturday, 2024

#### Transferring Allegories from Text to Stage — Some Possibilities and Problems

— Radha Raghunathan

##### Abstract

There are many allegorical plays in several languages. Three main types of plays were popular in Europe during the Middle Ages — the mystery plays, the miracle plays and the morality plays. These were based on Biblical themes. The allegorical dramas, also known as morality plays, were popular in Europe during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. Indian literature is replete with allegorical themes amenable for enacting on stage. For instance, *Prabōdha candrōdaya*, *Saṅkalpa suryōdaya*, *Bhāvanā-Puruṣōttama* and so on in Sanskrit. Incidentally, these plays are philosophical in their contents. We have allegorical themes with philosophical contents in other Indian languages also. Notable in Tamil are the two *paraṇi* works, namely *Mōhavatai-p paraṇi* and *Ajñavatai-p paraṇi*, both by Tattuvarāyar (15<sup>th</sup> cent.). These two works are treatises on Advaita Vedānta. In the twentieth century, we have the allegorical novella *Ñāna-ratam* by Mahākavi Subramaṇia Bharatiyar. The novella was adapted for stage and presented as a dance-drama. So too with *Prabōdha candrōdaya*. But, these presentations are a rarity, when similar themes from the Purāṇas and Itihāsas are staged regularly and greatly savoured by the audience. This presenter invites the audience for an interactive discussion on the possibilities and problems, if any, in transferring allegorical themes from text to stage.

## CROSSROADS AND BYROADS:

### Consonance in Indian Classical Writings and Visual and Performing Arts

Seminar organized by ALRC — July 19 Friday & 20 Saturday, 2024



#### Profile

**Dr. Radha Raghunathan** is an M.A. in Indian Philosophy and M.A. in Applied Sanskrit. She earned her PhD. from University of Madras for her thesis titled ‘*The Contribution of Tattuvārāyar to Tamil Advaitam with Special Reference to Sasivanna bōdam.*’

She is Researcher, Author, and Translator of Vedānta-related works and manuscripts, Editor and Reviewer. Currently, she is Honorary Director and General Editor at Adyar Library and Research Centre (ALRC).

Dr. Radha has presented several papers at National and International seminars and Symposia. She has published several articles in reputed research journals and newspapers. Notable among her published books are —

*Jñānāṅkuṣam with Two Commentaries, Bellamkoṇḍa Rāmarāya Kavi’s Vedānta Muktvālī with Introduction and Notes, Translation with Notes on Parāśara Bhaṭṭar’s Aṣṭaślokī in Sanskrit with Prativādi Bhayaṅkaram Annaṅgarācāryār’s Sārārta Dīpikai commentary in Maṇipravāla, Paramatabhaṅga: An Exposition — Śrī Vedānta Deśika’s Critique of Non-Viśiṣṭādvaita Philosophies, Soaring with Bharati in the Wisdom-chariot (Nānaratam) — Annotated Translation of the Tamil poet-writer Mahakavi Subramania Bharatiyar’s novella Nānaratam, Ādi Śaṅkara’s Nirvāṇa Śātkam — Translation of the text from Sanskrit with critical analysis. Her forthcoming book is a translation of Vedānta-saṁjñāvalī, a compendium of terms prevalent in Advaita Vedānta, with her commentary titled Rāddha-prakāśikā in English*

## CROSSROADS AND BYROADS:

### Consonance in Indian Classical Writings and Visual and Performing Arts

Seminar organized by ALRC — July 19 Friday & 20 Saturday, 2024

#### ALRC Seminar 2024 — Schedule

##### Friday, July 19, 2024

9.30 – 9.45 am	Prayer and Welcome
9.45 – 10.15 am	Mr. Tim Boyd — Inaugural Address
10.15 – 11.00 am	Dr. Premeela Gurumurthy (Tamil Music: <i>Paṇṇicai</i> ) — Keynote
11 – 11.15 am	Tea
11.15 am – 12 noon	Dr. Ambika Kameshwar (Bharatanāṭyam)
12 noon – 12.45 pm	Smt. Gowri Ramnarayan (Drama — <i>Sarpa-yajña</i> of <i>Mahābhārata</i> )
12.45 – 1.45 pm	Break ( <i>No canteen service</i> )
1.45 – 2.30 pm	Sri. Mukund Dev Sahoo (Drupad) (via Zoom)
2.30 – 3.15 pm	Prof. Madhusudanan Kalaichelvan (Elements for Dance Recital in <i>Cilappatikāram</i> ) (via Zoom)
3.15 pm – 4.00 pm	Ms. Jaishree Kannan (Carnatic Music — <i>Navavidha-bhakti</i> )
4 – 4.15	Tea
(End of Day 1)	

##### Saturday, July 20, 2024

9.30 – 10.15 am	Sri. Keshav Venkataraghavan (Painting) — Special Address
10.15 – 11 am	Dr. Rajshri Ramakrishna (Indian Musical forms)
11 – 11.15 am	Tea
11.15 – 12 noon	Dr. Shubhashree (Indian Musical Instruments)
12 noon – 12.45 pm	Dr. Hemalatha ( <i>Tāla-s</i> in Indian Music)
12.45 – 1.45 pm	Break ( <i>No canteen service</i> )
1.45 – 2.30 pm	Dr. K. Vidyuta (Sculpture and Architecture)
2.30 – 3.15 pm	Dr. V. R. Devika (‘Performed Texts and Built Texts’ – Interconnecting the monuments of Mamallapuram with Terukūtthu, <i>Dēvī Māhātmyam</i> , etc.)
3.15 – 3.45 pm	Dr. Radha Raghunathan (Allegorical plays)
3.45 – 4.00 pm	Vote of Thanks and National Anthem
4 – 4.15 pm	Tea
(End of Day 2 / End of Seminar)	

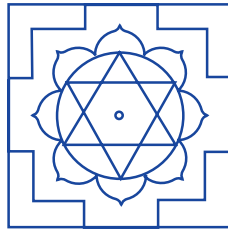


## THE ADYAR LIBRARY AND RESEARCH CENTRE

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The collections of the Library consist of about 18,000 manuscripts, containing about 45,000 works, both palm-leaf and paper, and some 2,00,000 printed volumes. The manuscripts are mostly from India and in Sanskrit. The printed books include old and rare Indological works and also a fine collection of books on the different religions and philosophies, in Sanskrit and English, and various other languages, eastern and western; and volumes of important Indological journals.

The Adyar Library Bulletin is being published since 1937, presenting studies on religion, philosophy and various aspects of Sanskrit and other Oriental literature as well as editions of ancient texts and translations.



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