

friday Review

THE HINDU

An ode to GNB

Tracing the Carnatic maestro's life and music on his memorial day **p2**

Remembering the guru

Rukmini Devi Natyakshetra's annual tribute event at Kalakshetra **p2**

THE GOLD FOIL LETTER THAT TELLS A 400-YEAR-OLD TALE

About the kings of Thanjavur and Denmark and the trade link **p4**

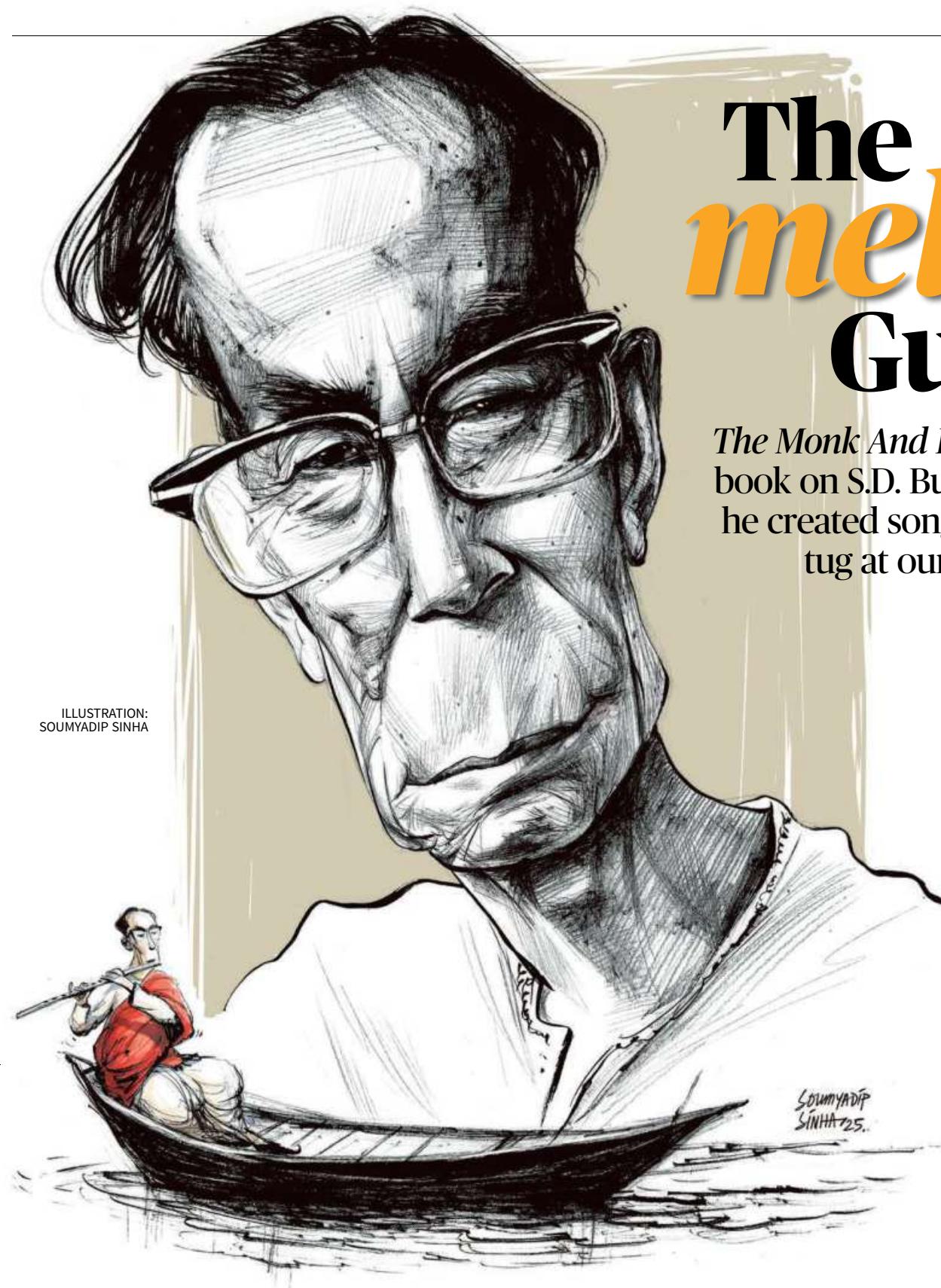


ILLUSTRATION: SOUMYADIP SINHA

The melody Guide

The Monk And His Music, the latest book on S.D. Burman, reveals how he created songs that continue to tug at our heartstrings

interludes in a song. Kersi Lord, arranger and accordion player, describes Burman as "diplomatic". He recalls, "Once a famous tabla artiste was playing at a fast pace. We tried to keep up with his tempo. Seeing this, *dada* told him - 'the rest of the musicians are not as well-prepared as you are. Please go a little slow'."

Lyricist Gopaldas Neeraj, who used to write according to the tunes Burman came up with, says the composer loved experimentation in writing. He cites the examples of the *Prem Pujari* song 'Phoolon ke rang se', where the *mukhda* comes after the *antara*,

and the *Gambler* hit 'Dil aaj shayar' which had no *mukhda*. Neeraj adds, "Before composing, *dada* would understand the story, and create music according to the situation. To get to the heart of the scene, he would sometimes enact the role of the actor where the song was to be picturised."

While the book takes readers back in time to the golden period of Hindi film music when melody reigned supreme, the section on singers seems weak. Quotes from Lata Mangeshkar and Asha Bhosle would have added more weight to the narration.

Lyricist Yogesh Gaur talks at length about the recording of songs for Hrishikesh Mukherjee's *Mili*, when Burman suddenly took ill. "The song 'Badi sooni sooni hai' was the first to be recorded. Ashish Roy and Bablu Chakraborty were the music arrangers. *Dada* felt unwell while rehearsing with Kishore

Burman's best

- Chod do aanchal (Paying Guest)
- Dil Pukare (Jewel Thief)
- Hai apna dil to awara (Solva Saal)
- Kya se kya hogaya (Guide)
- Wahan kaun hai tera musafir (Guide)
- Mere sapnon ki rani (Aradhana)
- Jaane woh kaise (Pyaasa)
- O mere majhi (Bandini)
- Teri bindiya re (Abhimaan)
- Khilte hain gul yahaan (Sharmilee)

Kumar and had to be rushed to Bombay Hospital. I was heartbroken and wept for days. We composed from what was finalised at the sittings. I was the only one who had all the songs on a tape. *Dada* never recovered and passed away."

Arranger Bablu Chakraborty shares how *dada* always closed his eyes while singing. "It was Dev saab (Dev Anand) who pointed this out to me. He never looked at us for our reaction. Such was his concentration."

Gulzar was closely associated with both S.D. and R.D. Burman. Though he started his career with the senior Burman in the 1960s, his collaboration with Pancham resulted in some of the finest films and songs of Hindi cinema. Remembering *dada*, Gulzar says in the book that he was always impeccably dressed, wearing a well-starched shirt even at home.

Many interviewees talk about S.D. Burman's love for *paan*. According to santoor maestro Pt. Shivkumar Sharma, he would rarely share it, but if he liked someone's work, he would offer *paan* as a reward.

The legendary composer's songs covered a wide spectrum of emotions. *The Monk and His Music* gives an insight into his distinct personality and musical oeuvre. A cultural traveller of sorts, his tunes bridged different musical traditions. 'Hum hai raahi pyaar ke humse kuchh na bolive, Jo bhi pyaar se mila hum usike ho liye' (*Nau do gyarah*), one of his much-loved songs, aptly sums up S.D. Burman's journey.

Narendra Kusnur

Recalling an amusing incident on the sets of the 1960 film *Kala Bazar*, actor Waheeda Rahman describes how the entire team laughed when music director Sachin Dev Burman demonstrated the steps she should do in the song 'Rimjhim ke taraane'. In another instance, Gulzar talks about a debate between Burman and *Bandini* director Bimal Roy over how Nutan should be depicted in 'Mora gora ang le le', his debut song as a lyricist.

These anecdotes prove how deeply S.D. Burman was involved with the picturisation of his songs. This trait of his is discussed often in the book *The Monk And His Music* (Quarate Books) by Moti Lalwani and Richa Lakhnpal. Other aspects such as his interactions with musicians and filmmakers, his sense of dressing and his love for the East Bengal football team and *paan* are mentioned too.

This isn't a quintessential musical biography. Thirteen books have already been written on the composer. And we might see more in the years to come.

S.D. Burman's music was a beautiful blend of folk and classical that he imbibed as a child growing up in Comilla (now part of Bangladesh). Quite a few of his songs drew a visual imagery of Bengal through their *Baul* and *Bhatiali*-inspired tunes. While Burman's mother, Rajkumari Nirmala Devi, was the royal princess of Manipur, his father, Nabadvipchandra Dev Burman, was

the son of the maharaja of Tripura. Moving away from the royal trappings, Burman found his calling in music, and eventually shifted to Mumbai.

In *The Monk And His Music*, Moti and Richa have interviewed 50 people associated with Burman, either professionally or personally, such as radio personality Ameen Sayani, music director Anandji Shah, Ravindra Jain, Pyarelal Sharma and Khayyam. It also includes classical musicians such as Pt. Shivkumar Sharma and Pt. Hariprasad Chaurasia, and lyricists Yogesh

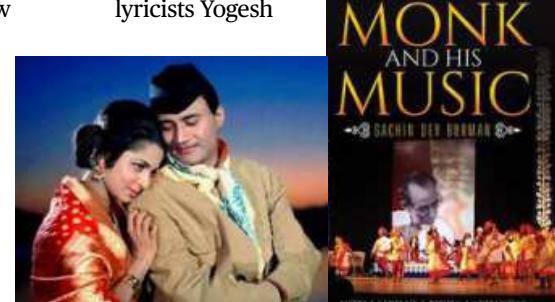
Gaur and Gopaldas Neeraj. The book is replete with anecdotes.

The interviews have been uploaded on YouTube, and then edited and compiled for the book. Filmmaker Brahmanand Singh, who has made documentaries on R.D. Burman and Jagjit Singh, has written the foreword. Says Moti, "The name S.D. Burman has such a magical effect that it opened all doors for us. In 2009, we planned to make a biopic on him and began recording the interviews. But it proved to be an expensive proposition. It's then that we decided to write this book."

The book is divided into various sections, with a few articles giving specific accounts of Burman's life. The back cover carries a quote by son Rahul Dev Burman (Pancham) – "And now he is indeed gone forever, bequeathing his exalted legacy to me, a monumental legacy I will try my best to carry forward." Pancham had said this to Ameen Sayani after *dada* passed away on October 31, 1975.

Some of the most interesting observations are from musicians and arrangers. Describing Burman's work ethic, rhythm player Ranjit Gazmer says, "The musicians would come at 9 a.m. and start tuning their instruments. *Dada* (S.D. Burman) would come around 10.30 a.m. He did not have any airs, unlike some other composers. His recordings usually got over on time. If *dada* was happy with a recording, he would give some money to the peon and one or two junior staff members of the studio. He would listen to the takes with the recordist, discuss with him on which one to keep, and then go home."

Saxophone player and arranger Manohari Singh speaks about how Burman wanted only short



Play back (Clockwise from above) S.D. Burman with his orchestra; Dev Anand and Waheeda Rahman in *Guide*; the book; and R.D. Burman with Gulzar. PHOTOS: THE HINDU ARCHIVES & SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Quite a few of the composer's songs drew a visual imagery of Bengal through their *Baul* and *Bhatiali*-inspired tunes

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Aishwarya Raghunathan

In a hall resonant with reverence, rare echoes from the bygone era of Carnatic music came alive. At Narada Gana Sabha, in the presence of Nalli Kuppuswami Chetti, veteran Carnatic vocalist Trichur V Ramachandran paid a heartfelt tribute to his guru, the inimitable G.N. Balasubramaniam (GNB), on the maestro's 60th Memorial Day. The event, a lecture-demonstration, became a deeply immersive homage, part historical resurrection, part emotional reminiscence, anchored by archival recordings and personal anecdotes.

Significantly, this was the first time GNB's rare recordings, painstakingly revived, were presented in a public setting. These were not mere performances; they were windows into the very soul of an artiste who revolutionised Carnatic music.

Trichur V Ramachandran opened the evening with a profound declaration: "To me, GNB was *Isai Devam*, a musical deity."

"The last century had many maha vidwans, but GNB came like lightning," Ramachandran said. As Semmangudi once remarked, he came like a tsunami". This dramatic arrival shook the conventions of Carnatic music, not by defying tradition, but by illuminating it with unparalleled clarity, voice, and vision.

His *saariram* (voice), his *swarajñanam* (intuitive grasp of notes), fearless manodharma, innovative presentations and innate gayaka lakshanam captivated both the scholar and the common rasika.

One story stood out as a glowing testament to GNB's genius. After listening to the arohanam and avarohanam of raga Gowda Malhar, composed by Muthiah Bhagavtar, GNB came up with such an evocative raga elaboration that the composer, who happened to



Obeisance to guru Trichur Ramachandran speaking at the GNB memorial day event
PHOTOS: THE HINDU ARCHIVES AND R. RAGU

On the maestro's 60th memorial day, his creative genius was highlighted through rare recordings and a talk at an event organised by his sishya and musician Trichur V Ramachandran

Deconstructing the GNB bani

listen to it, was moved to tears and gifted GNB a tambura and invited him to teach at Annamalai University.

Such was the transformative quality of GNB's music. It didn't just adhere to the shastras; it expanded their expressive potential. "Our music is shastriya sangeetham," said Ramachandran. "GNB stayed true to its core while enlarging its boundaries."

Rare confluence
GNB stood at a tradition and innovation. His crystal-clear brigas, delivered at lightning

speed, paired with a calm and steady madhyama kala pacing, became the defining hallmark of the 'GNB bani'. His voice could navigate three octaves with precision, intertwining technical dexterity with emotional depth. He wasn't just a vocalist. He was a composer, thinker and teacher, who drew Hindustani ragas into the Carnatic fold with elegance. His ragamalikas sparked with these influences, producing sonic textures that were at once surprising and satisfying.

In his compositions too, he ventured into unexplored ragas. GNB composed

varnams and kritis in rare ragas such as Andolika, Udayaravi Chandrika, Narayani, Malavi, and more.

For GNB, alapana was architecture, not abstraction. His approach flowed through four stages: an initial sweep of the raga, a stepwise development emphasising key notes and gamakas, expansion into the upper registers, and a final return to the raga's emotive centre. He once told Ramachandran, "When I sing, I see swara devatas. The swaras emerge naturally for me." His manodharma was intuitive, yet grounded.

The recordings played during the evening were drawn from Mysore, Pudukkottai, and Kolkata, some dating back to the 1940s. The event opened with the dynamic *Jaya jaya jaya janaki kantha* in raga Nattai, with Chowdiah on the violin, setting a majestic tone. This was followed by an alapana in Hindolam that flowed into 'Samajavaragamana', with an extraordinary 40 avartanam kalpanaswara that explored every facet of the raga.

A spellbinding Sankarabharanam followed. The 1964 *Shanmukhapriya* recording from Pudukkottai was another gem, showcasing GNB's application of dashavidha gamakas with mastery.

GNB's tanam bore his unmistakable stamp – brisk, clear, rhythmically sharp and marked by layajnana and swarasuddham. His gift was not just in the execution but in the revelation.

The evening reached a crescendo with a Bhairavi RTP, where GNB explored melkala brigas and built his improvisation like a sculptor. His traversal of the gandhamaram, a segment many vocalists avoid, was seamless and inspired.

Memorable RTP
From the early 1940s came a Kamboji tanam in trikalam and the Saveri RTP was a rhythmic marvel, weaving together tisra and chatusra nadais with ragamalika swaras and electrifying melka swaras.

Beyond performance, GNB was a Sri Vidya upasaka. Even in his last days, he called Ramachandran to his side and taught him every shloka and ritual, ensuring the spiritual tradition continued.

"For the past 15 years, we've been organizing this tribute," said Subashree Ramachandran, vocalist and daughter of Trichur V. Ramachandran.

Legacy is not merely remembered. It is relived, each time music is not just heard, but seen and felt too.

Bhakti-bhava blend

The Iyer Sisters paid a musical tribute to Purandaradasar through a rich variety of songs



In sync Sudha Iyer and Srividhya Iyer with Anuthama Murali on the violin and Nagai Narayanan on the mridangam. PHOTO: M. SRINATH

P. Srihari

With endearing candour, Purandaradasar addresses Vittala: "What if I am crooked, will your name lose its worth when uttered by me?", "What if the river twists and turns, will the water shed its sanctity?", "What if the flower is plain, will its fragrance be any less?", and so forth. An emphatic 'no, not at all' underpins each of these rhetorical questions.

Sridivya R.S. Iyer and Sudha R.S. Iyer rendered this soul-stirring devaranama 'Naa donka aadhaarenu' in their vocal recital for Sri Thiagaraja Sangeetha Vidwath Samajam when it celebrated the saint-composer's jayanthi recently.

So, what if the siblings' concert leaned more toward the austere than the flamboyant? It did serve its purpose as a fitting tribute to the 'Sangita Pithamaha' and his deep-rooted devotion. The diligent offering was ably supported by Anuthama Murali on the violin and Nagai Narayanan on the mridangam.

Rich raga contours
The Iyer sisters began with 'Sakala graha bala neene' in raga Atana, Khanda Chapu tala, topping it off with crisp swara exchanges. They followed it up with the aforesaid reflective song bearing the refrain 'aadhaarenu?' (what if?) in Hamsavinodini, a shadava-shadava raga (a hexatonic symmetry, omitting the panchamam), derived from Sankarabharanam. The raga suited the philosophical depth of the lyrics set to Rupakam. While the swarakalpana was tidy, a little more anchoring on the ga-ma-dha and ma-dha-ni phrases and their retrogrades would have better revealed the raga's contour.

Sridivya delineated Kanada, riding its mood-laden curves, ahead of 'Naa ninna dhanya doliralu' in Misra Chapu.

Another classic composition, it highlights the value of unwavering faith and the invincibility of Vittala's devotees. "Just as ants cannot touch fire, the jealous cannot

touch me, thanks to your grace."

Nattai made an unusually belated entry, as the fourth song, in the form of the Sanskrit composition 'Jaya jaya jaya janaki kantha' in Khanda Chapu. The sprightly madhyama kalam passages enhanced the appeal as the duo breezed through the song.

Kalyanasantham came up next, with Sudha tracing its emotive shades in an alapana that preserved its intrinsic plaintiveness. 'Innu dayabaarade', again in Khanda Chapu, brought out the dasa's spirit of subservience and surrender, and the sisters rendered it with poise.

Kalyani, the centrepiece
Kalyani was chosen as the centrepiece of the evening. Having sung in Hamsavinodini earlier, opting for another raga might have offered more tonal and structural contrast.

Nevertheless, Sudha expanded the raga methodically before passing on the baton to Sridivya, who navigated the upper octave with some absorbing phrases. The yearning of the soul for divine grace found voice in 'Dayamado ranga' (Adi), and the sisters infused the song with the requisite bhava. The niraval at the charanam opening 'Iphara gati neene' was particularly touching, and the swarakalpana with nishada nyasam was gripping.

Anuthama's sensitive playing augmented the melodic appeal throughout. The tani by Narayanan was brief, but vibrant.

Diverse repertoire
The devotional journey continued with 'Rama mantrava japiso' in Jhompuri, 'Jagadodharana' in Kapi, and 'Kandena govindana' in Chandrakaus, before the siblings signed off with 'Bhagyada lakshmi baramma' in Sri.

The repertoire offered a commendable thematic variety, though the rhythmic spectrum remained lopsided. While the Chapu-s and Rupakam held sway in the first half, Adi tala made its first

appearance only in the main kriti and stayed on till the end, casting a shade of monotony. Juggling the order a little would have averted the imbalance.

The Ramayana as a solo act

Premiered 12 years ago, 'Rama Katha' sustains interest with its visualisation and music

V.V. Ramani

Satyanaarayana Raju's 'Rama Katha', ideated by Usha R.K. and conceptualised and visualised by the dancer, continues to sustain interest 12 years after it was premiered. It was staged recently in Bengaluru.

'Wake up Lord, fulfill your role as the protector of the universe' pleads Tyagaraja in his kriti 'Melukovaiyya'. The dancer portrayed the significance of Rama in our lives in this introductory song, designed as an invocatory piece. The narration then began with Kausalya's vatsalya bhava as visualised in the Tulsidas bhajan 'Thumak chalat'

Ramchandra' and ending with a thillana.

Satyanaarayana Raju's abhinaya skills help him communicate emotions with ease. He portrayed different characters with impact. There were no exaggerated or overdramatised moments. Particularly in the scene, where Kaikeyi asks for two boons as promised by Dasaratha, Satyanarayana Raju handled sensitively the emotions.

Another standout scene was that of Jatayu as it transforms from a gentle bird, crouched in devotion to Rama, to one that soars into the sky to confront and fight Ravana. As the Lanka king chops its wings, it falls down and gets into a crouched position



again. The dancer's body language and nuanced abhinaya not only made this scene but also those of Manthara, Hanuman and Guha engrossing. The manner in which

the props were handled added an extra dimension. Entering the stage with a bow and arrow, and then placing it on top of a figure of Hanuman to indicate reverence and prayer was a nice idea. Also, using marigold strands for decoration during the coronation and then destroying the same strands to depict Manthara's anger was imaginative too.

The musical support was excellent. The rapport between the dancer and the vocalist was such that Satyanarayana Raju's expressions resonated in D.S. Srivaths's voice.

Raghunandan Ramakrishna on the flute and Vidyashankar on the mridangam enhanced the experience.

aesthetically conceived sequence formed a prelude to the presentation of 'Arupadai Veedu'.

Beginning with the episode where Ganesh and Muruga fight over a mango, the other sequences focussed on the temples that form the Arupadai Veedu. Aesthetically choreographed, the section dedicated to the temples had dancers portraying their distinct features through well-designed movement patterns and aptly-conceived sancharis.

The story of Soorapadman was the highlight here. From the vibrant dancing of the demonesses in the court and the entry of Soorapadman to the ensuing battle between him and Muruga, the sequences were developed as an engrossing costume drama.

An imaginative element was three apsaras witnessing the battle from behind a transparent curtain. It was a nice way to use the stage space.

The musical score was a fine blend of Carnatic ragas, chosen according to the scene. Vocalist Hariprasanth's bhava-rich voice added to the appeal of the production. M. Srikrishna on the mridangam, M.V. Srinivas on the violin, Bhagyalakshmi on the flute, Shyam on the tambura and Gunasekar on the conch offered amazing support. S. Premaathielded the cymbals.

The production, with well-coordinated costumes, sets, lighting and music, and dance composition was a heartfelt tribute to Rukmini Devi.

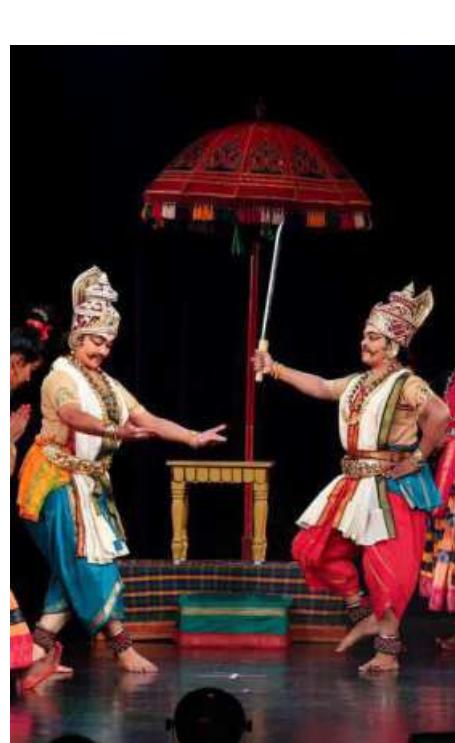


Melody strings

Cup O Carnatic, the popular web series, curated and presented by veena vidushi Jayanti Kumares, comes to the stage with a live performance on May 18, 6 p.m., at Narada Gana Sabha. The evening will bring together ragas, visuals and interactive moments with an aim to present Carnatic music to rasikas across different age groups. Jayanthi will perform with Pramath Kiran on the tabla and morsing and Giridhar Udupa on the ghatam. Keerthi Kumar will handle graphics and lights. Tickets available at bookmyshow.

Known story, refreshing approach

Kala Sadhana - 2025 presented 'Arupadai Veedu' at Kalakshetra as a tribute to Rukmini Devi



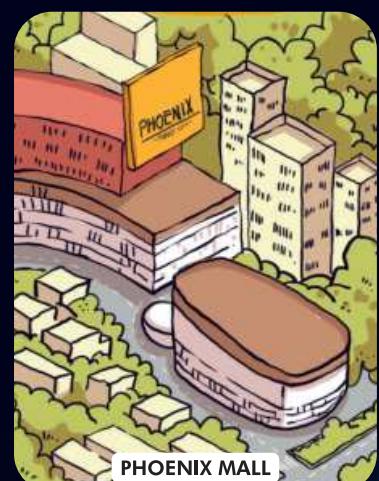
V.V. Ramani

Several students pass out of an institution but some take efforts to share what they have imbibed. S. Premaath is one such. After graduating from Kalakshetra, he went on to establish a dance institution in North Chennai. He named it Rukmini Devi Natyakshetra. Every year, he organises a tribute festival titled 'Kala Sadhana' at Kalakshetra as an offering to its

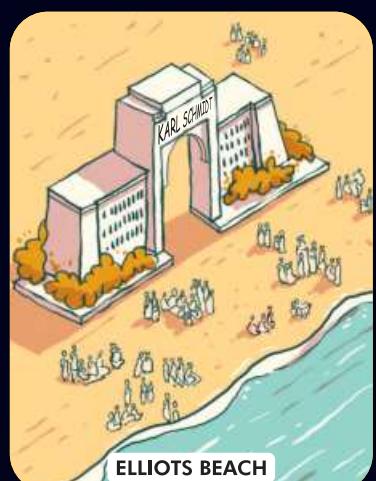
feet. The 2025 edition, held recently, began with the feet of six dancers seen below a *thiraiselai* (curtain), held by two other dancers. It was a graceful introduction to the six Karthigai *pengal*, who are intrinsic to the story of the birth of Muruga. This

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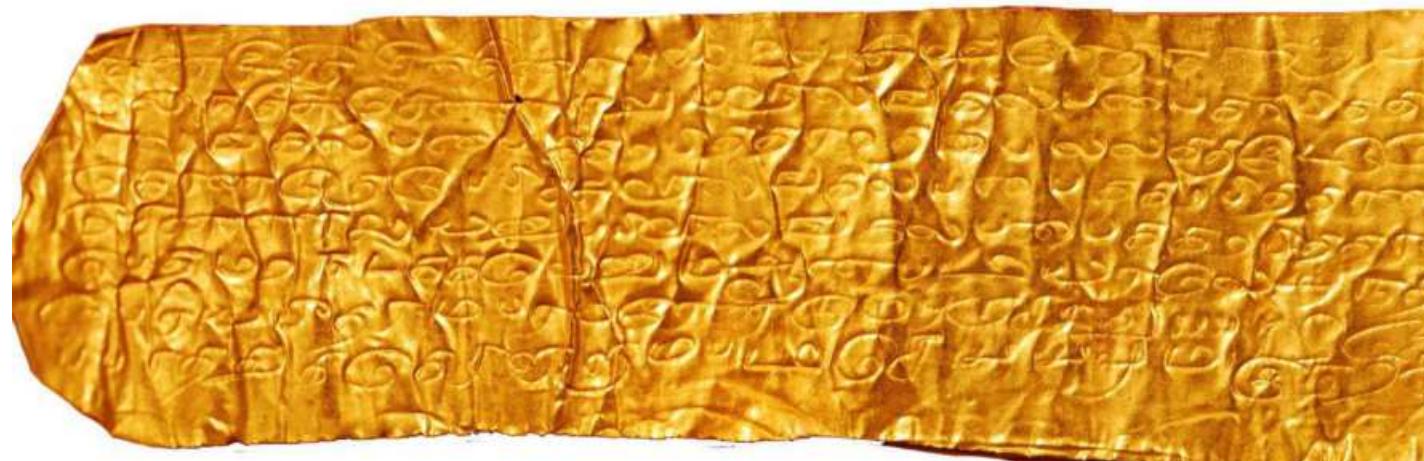
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The writing on the gold foil

A fascinating 400-year-old tale about the Danish East India Company and its alliance with Thanjavur

Hemanth Thiru

When someone utters "East India Company", you might quickly assume it to be British, but here's a story of two unlikely heroes – one from Thanjavur in South India and the other from Denmark, a medieval European kingdom. They were separated by vast oceans, but with a bit of fate, their lives intertwined 400 years ago, in 1616 CE.

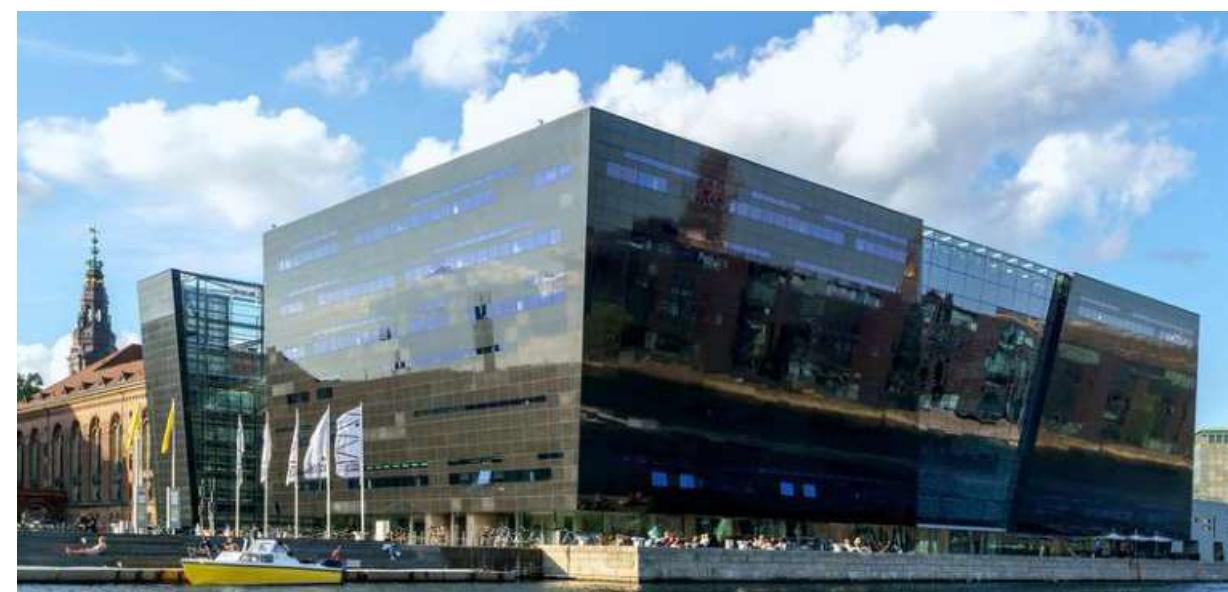
The first protagonist Christian IV of Denmark was exploring ways to boost his kingdom's economy. Other European powers such as the Portuguese, Dutch and British had a thriving sea trade with India and Sri Lanka, particularly for black pepper. Wanting a share of this market, he established the *Danish East India Company*. Citizens and nobles invested, and five huge ships were outfitted for a voyage in search of great wealth to Sri Lanka, where the Danes hoped to establish a trading post, based on a promised treaty with a Sri Lankan king.

The second protagonist was Raghunatha Nayak, who was ruling Thanjavur. His reign was marked by architectural achievements and careful political strategy. Wary of the increasing dominance of the Portuguese,

who were trading heavily from Nagapattinam, and seeking to boost his kingdom's economy while limiting Portuguese control, he looked out for other trade partners.

Now, who would string together the stories of the protagonists, who are on two ends of the world? Enter Captain Roland Crappé, the trade director of the newly-formed Danish East India Company. He was aboard the first Danish ship, the *Øresund*, and was ahead of the other four ships, after a gruelling 18-month sea journey, circumventing Africa. But, in the waters between India and Sri Lanka, Crappé captured a few Portuguese vessels, prompting a violent retaliation. The Portuguese navy wrecked the *Øresund*, and hung most of its crew. Captain Crappé, along with 12 survivors escaped, thanks to a local fisherman. And, landed in Thanjavur, where Crappé ended up meeting Raghunatha Nayak.

The King saw a unique opportunity – why not allow the Danes to trade with his kingdom too? He not only agreed to Crappé's request for possible trade, but also formally granted the Danes permission to build a fort and establish a trading post in a port called Tharangambadi (later renamed Tranquebar by the Danes), near Thanjavur. As a diplomatic gesture, Raghunatha



Nayak wrote a letter in ancient Tamil script on gold foil addressed to King Christian IV, inviting him to conduct trade in the port of Tharangambadi, and sent it along with gifts.

Meanwhile, the other four Danish ships, led by Commander Ove Giedde, stayed on course and reached Sri Lanka. But, the Portuguese had already signed an exclusive trade agreement with the King. The crushed Danes also heard about the fate of the *Øresund*. Their massive investment and the long journey seemed to be for nothing. But, a

message from Captain Crappé cheered them up. "The Tanjore King has agreed to trade with us. Make your way here soon." Commander Giedde immediately travelled to Thanjavur.

Soon, construction of a fortress named *Dansborg* began, and fortification walls were built around Tranquebar. From this base, the Danes exchanged goods across the world, engaged in trade and lived for over 200 years, until the trading post was sold to the British in 1845 CE.

This relationship also left a legacy of historical sites and treasured artefacts, out of which the golden foil and the treaty are still preserved like the royal treasure it is in Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark.

Historian R. Nagaswamy was the first to read and interpret the contents of the letter, though it is unclear if he got hold of the gold foil, or if he received an estampage or pictures of the foil for his study.

And so, I travelled to Denmark for one reason – to see this artefact in person. After months, the approval came. Landing on a chilly autumn morning, I quickly reached the grand-looking Royal Library (*Det Kongelige Bibliotek*).

In the quiet research reading

room, a big box had been set aside for me. Inside it lay the legendary artefact I had long dreamed of having a peek at – the Thanjavur gold foil letter, preserved carefully by the archival experts of Denmark. I got to touch a piece of global history, written in Thanjavur and still shimmering in Denmark.

The royal connection (Clockwise from far left) The gold foil letter with ancient Tamil script; a portrait of Christian IV of Denmark; The Black Diamond, Royal Danish Library's cultural centre in Copenhagen; and the statue of Raghunatha Nayak. PHOTOS COURTESY: WIKIPEDIA & SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The delicate foil bore intricate Tamil letters of a bygone era. It measured 40 cm in length and 2.5 cm in width.

The content in Tamil read: "Raudra varusham chithirai naal 20 Raghunatha nayakkar Dhinamark raasavinavargal vaasal kaariyappaerkku..." The letter starts with the Hindu calendar date which corresponds to April 16, 1620, in the Gregorian calendar. It was amusing to see how some words were 'Tamilised' – *Dhinamark* for Denmark and *Ulandheesu* for Holland. There was a 'Roolangkalappai Karpithaar' too – Captain Roland Crappé.

Just like any Tamil inscription from the past, there were no word-spacing or punctuation marks, not even a period at the end of a sentence.

The letter goes on to say that the people of Denmark were permitted to settle down and conduct trade in Tharangambadi.

Raghunatha Nayak concludes by listing out the generous royal gifts for the Danish King – two silk *pithambarams*, a *tuppatti* (shawl), two *pachavadams*, and a variety of intricately crafted swords and *Kataari* daggers. The whereabouts of these artefacts are unknown.

There was another captivating sight. On the right side of the foil, surrounded by Tamil script, stood a signature – in Telugu. The signature of Raghunatha Nayak. Etched in gold, a royal hand's seal on a serendipitous international alliance centuries ago.

CALENDAR

Kuchipudi course

The Kuchipudi Art Academy will conduct a four-day certificate course from May 15 to 18 in memory of the academy's former secretary, Vempati Venkatachalam, son of Vempati Chinna Satyam. The course concludes with 'Vempati's Yugadi: The Dawn of the New Era', on May 18 at 5.30 p.m. The Venkatachalam Yuva Puraskar will be presented to dancer Pasumathy Kumara Datta. The event will close with a performance by Reenu Bhagavi C.

Dikshitar jayanti

The Triplicane Cultural Academy has organised Vivek Sadasivam's Carnatic vocal concert, in connection with the 250th birth anniversary of Muthuswami Dikshitar, on May 18, 6.15 p.m. at Ragasudha hall, Luz, Mylapore. Accompanied by B. Ananthakrishnan on the violin and Ganapathyraman on the mridangam, Vivek will present Dikshitar kritis.

Thematic concerts

The Music Academy, will feature the following concerts at the Kasturi Srinivasan Hall. Details: May 19, 6 p.m.: Gopalakrishna Bharathi's compositions will be rendered by S. Swarathmika (vocal). She will be accompanied by Chaganti Ramya Kiranmayi (violin) and Kundurthi Aravind (mridangam). The programme will be held under the endowment, instituted by Malathi Rangaswami, in memory of T.T. Rangaswami.

May 20, 6 p.m.: P. Vikram (vocal) will perform for HCL concert series. C.S. Chinmayi (violin) and Malladi Sree Aravind (mridangam) are the accompanists.

May 21, 6 p.m.: Swathi Tirunal day concert will be by N.S. Lekshmy with Mantha Srirama (violin) and Nellai A. Balaji (mridangam). Endowment instituted by M/S. Arun Fabricators.

May 22, 6 p.m.: Vocal concert by Cotah sisters for Mysore Vasudevarach day. Purva Dhanashree and Paavani will be supported by Thirucherai B. Karthik (violin), Indalur R.D. Adarsh (mridangam). Endowment instituted by late Smt. Gomathi Visvanathan through Kala Mandir Trust.