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'Passionate Pursuit' celebrates Lalgudi tradition of violin

- [Nahla Nainar](#)

Anuradha Sridhar leads a musical tribute to Lalgudi Srimathi Brahmanandam



Carnatic violin exponent Lalgudi Srimathi Brahmanandam with her daughter and disciple Anuradha Sridhar.— PHOTO: A. MURALITHARAN

A musical tribute to violin virtuoso Lalgudi Srimathi Brahmanandam was presented by her daughter and disciple Anuradha Sridhar and students of her San Francisco-based Trinity Center for Music at the Community Hall of the BHEL Township in Kailasapuram on Tuesday. Featuring 22 violinists in the concert, the well-attended event, titled "Passionate Pursuit", served as a celebration of the American school's 25th anniversary, and highlighted the rich Carnatic lineage of the Lalgudi tradition. It was the second of four concerts planned to mark the milestone year.

Ms. Sridhar's brother Shriram Brahmanandam, a prolific composer and expert mridangam player, was a key participant in the evening.

Rasika Ranjana Sabha felicitated Ms. Srimathi with a citation and silver medal as part of its ongoing centenary celebrations.

Srimathi Brahmanandam, now based Chennai, is the sister of Lalgudi G. Jayaraman, with whom she has presented over 500 concerts from 1957.

"Our family has been steeped in music for four generations," Ms. Srimathi told *The Hindu* in a pre-concert interview.

The direct descendants of Saint Thyagaraja (1767–1847), who was their father V. R. Gopala Iyer's grandfather, and guru, G. Jayaraman and Srimathi, were a hit combination on stage, particularly at R.R. Sabha, where most early concerts were held.

When she started, Ms. Srimathi, who underwent rigorous training under her father and brother, was among the few women artistes in the male-dominated bastion of classical music in India. "Sometimes, there used to be opposition, but because I was fully immersed in music, I just had to overcome it and carry on," she said.

Her desire to take the Lalgudi musical legacy forward resulted in her daughter Anuradha taking up violin lessons from the age of four in 1968, and debuting on stage with her mother at the age of 11, accompanied by Dr. T.K. Moorthy on the mridangam.

Ms. Sridhar went to the U.S. for higher education, and later practised as a chartered accountant. She quit accountancy after 10 years and returned to Carnatic music as a fulltime violinist in the 1980s. "Unless you are only focused on music, you can't do justice to it," she said.

She set up the Trinity Music Centre in 1989. "There's a broad range of people now interested in Carnatic music," said Ms. Sridhar. While the interest level was higher than before, only a few could become accomplished musicians.

"Only Indian children are learning Carnatic music to pursue it professionally, and most parents in the U.S. are using it as a means to introduce their children to Indian culture. Carnatic music has religion, spirituality, language and tradition, and it comes through in a nice package for them," she said. The centre had launched an online university to help Carnatic music enthusiasts pursue their passion through remote learning.

Carnatic musicians usually have to learn the vocal component of compositions first before rendering them as instrumental pieces.

An expert in conveying the epiphany of lyrics through musical rendition, Ms. Srimathi said: "In our times, our gurus would just dictate the lyrics. We had to first understand their meaning, then add the emotion to it. That is why it is easier to connect with the listener through singing rather than musical notation. This is something my brother and I have done a lot in our career."

Speaking of the prodigious talent of her mother's generation, Ms. Sridhar said: "The artistes of those days have a level of expertise that is

unattainable by anybody like me who is doing this and that, or by my children," she said.

"We are all playing well, but they were phenomenal. And there is no doubt that only those who dedicated their lives to practising 18 hours a day, will get to that level."

Among the many popular recordings of the G. Jayaraman-Srimathi duo are the enhanced versions of Saint Thyagaraja's Lalgudi Pancharathana kritis redone in vocal and musical forms in 1967.

'Passionate Pursuit' concerts will be held next in Bengaluru on July 31 and in San Jose, California, on August 22.

- **The occasion was also a celebration of 25th anniversary of Trinity Center for Music**
- **Two concerts have been planned in Bengaluru, San Jose as part of 'Passionate Pursuit'**

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