

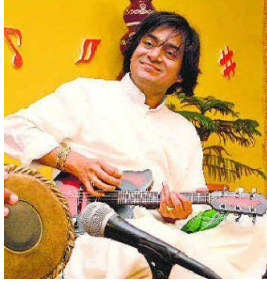
(Special Edition\*)

A newsletter from SRGMPDN- your Forum for Carnatic Music

\* This edition features a guest column.

## My Experiences with Revered Sri. Mandolin U Shrinivas

Gnana Prasuna



I really cherish this opportunity to share some great moments we have experienced, during all these years that my son Aravind, has been a student of Padmasri Mandolin U Shrinivas.

All of us have been and still are great fans of Mandolin Shrinivas. When I wanted to initiate my son to classical music at 6years, everyone advised me to start with vocal as I was a vocalist myself, but my instant choice was Sri Shrinivas. I assumed and hoped he would accept Aravind as a student, since I felt, it would be better if he imbibed his 'bani' (style), early on.

He was spontaneous in his acceptance and assured me this was the right move.

We all know he is passionate about his music. I discovered he is equally passionate about teaching and is one of those rare make of Gurus, who is just gushing to pass on his knowledge to the next generation, which is extensive. His love, patience, lenience and down to earth attitude with his students, make him very popular with the students also.

The love and patience he showers on his students is a real treat to watch. I had the privilege of observing this as I accompanied my son to classes for many years.

A small incident that I recall....

My son was a very bold and happily pampered 6year old, when I took him to Shrinivasji. Though he didn't understand much, Aravind was very attracted by the easy fashion in which, Shrinivasji demonstrated 'Mayamalavagoula', before teaching the 1<sup>st</sup> 'saraliswaram' to him. Shrinivas garu assured Aravind, he can also play similarly, if he practices well.

### Upcoming Events and Concerts:

1. **Oct 1<sup>st</sup>** – Jugalbandhi concert by Dr. M. Balamuralikrishna and Ronu Majumdar, Abhijit Banarjee & other artists. Details: [www.ssvt.org](http://www.ssvt.org)
2. **Oct 15<sup>th</sup>** – Vocal concert by Smt. Sangeetha Sivakumar. Details: [www.ssvt.org](http://www.ssvt.org)

Aravind took to heart what Gurji said and practiced the initial 'srgmpdns' very studiously. When we went to the next class, he proudly played his bit and looked expectantly at Guruji. Shrinivas being benevolent smiled charmingly and said good. What came next, took me aback a little. My audacious son, boldly questioned—"Did I play like you?" Shrinivasgaru seriously answered, "If you continue to practice well, you can play better than me". ! I can imagine any number of Gurus reacting differently, even if it was from an innocent child.

He has a self-made rule- In the present times, where classes are counted and priced by the hours; he teaches absolutely free of cost and very reluctantly, accepts even the fruits and sweets that the students offer on 'Vijayadasami' day. He always maintains- the best 'Gurudakshina' his students could give him would be to learn and play well!

He is a highly disciplined and pious person. In spite of his celebrity status and busy schedule, one can always catch him walk down to the temple close by, early morning, and sometimes, also running some small errands for his mother.

In public or private, he never fails to touch the feet and take blessings of, not only senior Vidwans but any elders present at the time. He has an amazing memory and remembers even the small details about individuals, thereby giving a personal touch to his enquiries when we meet him.

Even after so many performances, he always treats every concert- be it in a temple festival, December season or a big show abroad- with the same reverence, he did his earliest concerts. He would be present in the hall 2 hours before the scheduled time and seat himself on the stage 1 hour before, (if someone is performing before him, than in the greenroom) do his meditation, tune his instrument and do some warm up exercises on his mandolin. I believe this level of Bhakti and commitment is what makes his music so magnetic.

Above all these qualities is his humility. He is always humble and treats everyone with equal respect and a kind word. He indulges and inspires a small child with his attention and bow to a senior vidwan, with the same sincerity and humility.

As I already mentioned, his classes are a treat to watch. Every Saturday and Sunday he sits with his students from 9.30 in the morning to 3.00 or sometimes more also, provided he is in town.

He teaches patiently 'saralis' to the little ones, playing with the seniors and almost, generally becoming one among them. He rarely loses his temper with the kids, however much they tax him. Instead, he cuts jokes and has a subtle sense of humor.

All this doesn't mean any compromises, where the learning is concerned!!

He would say, "No problem... What you do...Just sit in that corner and practice the same line 50 times and then show me..I'll be here only"! All this with a very charming smile. The student can't even complain after such a sweet smile....

When the student takes time, to understand and learn, the patience he displays, always amazes me, as he himself, is an 'Ekasanthagrahi' (one who learns, at the first instance)!

Being a teacher myself, I admit, sometimes the kids can be real menaces! He is totally selfless where sharing his knowledge is concerned, openly wishes the students welfare, always appreciates when they do



### Kuttis' Korner:

(Answers in the next Issue)

1. How is a thala different from a rhythm?
2. Who is considered the architect of the present day concert format?
3. Name the (string) instrumentalist who never had any accompaniment for any of his/her concert?

Answers to last issue's Kuttis' Korner questions:

1. Name a composer who has composed in both Carnatic and Hindustani music –Swathi Thirunal
2. What was different about the violin used by Vidwan T. Chowdiah – He used 7 strings
3. Name veena S.Balachander's guru – Apparently he was a self-taught artist (played tabla, Kanjeera, sitar & several other instruments as well)
4. In total, how many full and half notes are there in Carnatic music? Seven and five or total of 12 or with Vivadi swaras total of 16.

### SRGMPDN Forum Weblinks:

- <https://sites.google.com/site/carnaticmusicrasikasofdc/>
- <http://www.youtube.com/user/SRGMPDNGroup>
- <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/srgmpdn-music-forum>