

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR  
OF TAMIL NADU AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE 17<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL FINE ARTS  
FESTIVAL 2018 ORGANISED BY MEENAKSHI SUNDARARAJAN FINE ARTS  
ACADEMY AT KODAMBAKKAM, CHENNAI ON 04.12.2018 AT 7.00 P.M**

**Anaivarukkum Maalai Vanakkam**

**Dr. K. S. Lakshmi,**  
Secretary, Meenakshi College for Women

**Padmashri Awardee Dr. Nalli Kuppuswami Chetty,**

**Dr. K. S. Babai,**  
Correspondent, Meenakshi Sundararajan Engineering College

**Thiru. Mangat Ram Sharma,**  
Principal Secretary to Government,  
Higher Education Department

Distinguished Invitees

Ladies & Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to be here this evening at the inauguration of the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Fine Arts Festival, organized by the Meenakshi Sundararajan Fine Arts Academy.

December brings with it a plethora of fine arts festivals. This is the time when Chennai plays host to an illustrious set of musicians and dancers who are patronized by distinguished intelligent audiences, knowledgeable in their appreciation of the fine arts. An impressive array of musicians and artists who have nurtured the rich classical music, dance and Cultural traditions of Tamil Nadu for long, will, I am sure, be performing at this fine arts festival also.

Like many other art forms in Indian culture, classical music is understood to be divine and is venerated as symbolic of the nada Brahman. Ancient treatises also describe the connection of the origin of the swaras, or notes, to the sounds of animals and birds and man's effort to simulate these sounds through consistent observation. The Sama Veda, which is believed to have laid the foundation for Indian classical music, consists of hymns from the Rigveda, set to musical tunes which would be sung using three to seven musical notes during Vedic yajnas. The Yajur-Veda, which mainly consists of sacrificial formulae, mentions the veena as an accompaniment to vocal recitations.

Carnatic music is one of two main subgenres of Indian classical music that evolved from ancient Indian traditions, the other subgenre being Hindustani music.

Owing to the influence of the royal dynasties that had their origins in Turkey and Persia Indian classical music branched off and assumed two distinct forms – Hindustani music and Carnatic music. By the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, there was a clear demarcation between the two. Carnatic music unaffected by external influences flourished under the Vijayanagar Empire and Purandara Dasa, who is known as the “father (Pitamaha) of Carnatic music”, systematized the teaching of this classical form. Venkatamukhi thereafter invented and authored the formula for the melakarta system of raga classification in his Sanskrit work, the Chaturdandi Prakasika and Govindacharya is known for expanding the melakarta system into the sampoorana raga scheme – the system that is in common use today.

Carnatic music was mainly patronized by the kings of Mysore and Travancore, and the Maratha rulers of Tanjore in the 18th and 19th centuries. It was during this period that Tyagaraj, Muthuswami Dikshitar and Syama Sastri who are regarded as the Trinity of Carnatic music composed their kritis.

The 20th century also contributed many greats to the cultural tapestry of South India among whom notable personalities include Swati Tirunal, Annamacharya, Muthiah Bhagavathar, Arunagiri nathar, Neelakanta Sivan and Papanasam Sivan.

The very core of Carnatic music is its spirituality and quest for perfection.

Lord Shiva is considered to be the embodiment of Nadha and Thandava. Goddess Parvathi is seen as the embodiment of Lasya, the feminine quality. Goddess Saraswathi is associated with the Veena and Nandi is considered to be the master of Laya.

Similarly Bharatanatyam traces its origins to the Natya Shastra of Bharata Muni and also finds a mention in the ancient Tamil epic Silappathikaram. This dance form is generally used as a medium for narration of legends and ideas from religious texts and scriptures.

The modern version of Kuchipudi was systematized by Tirtha Narayana Yati, a sanyasi of the Advaita persuasion and his disciple.

Kathak is derived from the Sanskrit word katha, and is a medium to communicate stories from the epics and puranas through dance, songs and music.

Odissi is a classical dance that originated in Odisha and expresses stories and ideas of Vaishnavism, particularly of Lord Jagannath.

Manipuri is particularly known for its Vaishnavite themes focused on Radha Krishna.

The world over, dance and music are expected to calm the mind and please the bodily senses. The Indian form of cultural expression goes one step further in that, it appeals to the soul. Hence Carnatic music performances become soul stirring in character when they are rendered with devotion and reverence to the art form.

Artists spend their lifetime in Saadhana, dedicating their energies to the pursuit of excellence in their chosen art form.

I appreciate the efforts taken by Dr. K.S. Lakshmi, Secretary, Meenakshi College for Women who has been working tirelessly to organise this cultural festival year after year.

Fine arts festivals such as these, serve the all-important purpose of bringing the performers of Classical arts closer to the people. The festivals provide a platform for budding artists to exhibit their talent. It helps create awareness about varied expressions of the art form by different artistes.

An Artist establishes an identity for his culture and society. One is full of praise for the manner in which the city of Chennai has promoted art and music for several decades. No wonder that UNESCO has recognised this contribution of Chennai and has included it in the list of heritage centres which have creatively contributed to music. There are only two other cities of India in this list – Varanasi and Jaipur.

I wish to conclude by saying that “Tolerance and justice are not merely morally desirable ends, but tools which underpin society and enable it to function. In other words, tolerance and justice are not abstract concepts but expressions of culture in practice.

Strong and vibrant cultures themselves nurture tolerance and justice. All cultures worth the name protect support and encourage diversity; and justice is the practical mechanism which enables them to do so.”

I congratulate the management of the Meenakshi Sundararajan College who have taken special efforts to organise this cultural feast year after year without fail. This is the 17<sup>th</sup> year of the programme. I am certain that noble initiatives such as these will be carried forward into the future with greater strength and vigour. May success greet them at every step along the way.

Nandri Vanakkam....

Jai Hind.....