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Sanjay Subrahmanyam

Bio Data

Sanjay Subrahmanyam, born on 21st January 1968, is one of the leading Carnatic musicians of India. Among the foremost of the younger generation of Indian classical musicians who stormed the country in the nineties, he is today is regarded as one of the most serious, popular and sought after of Carnatic vocal artistes.

Musical Training

- Initially trained in the violin and vocal by Guru V. Lakshminarayana from 1975 to 1982.
- Then switched to vocal music and learnt from Guru Rukmini Rajagopalan from 1982 to 1990.
- Also sharpened skills further under the renowned Guru Vidwan Calcutta K.S.Krishnamurti from 1989 to 1999.
- Has received guidance from Nadaswaram vidwan Guru Sembanarkoil SRD Vaidyanathan. 2003- 2014

Musical Style

In his formative years, while tutelage and mentoring from Gurus gave Sanjay a firm foundation, a keen and receptive mind helped quick assimilation and internalisation of great musical styles going across several generations- access to concert halls and audio archives coming as a great boon. Thus, when Sanjay launched into singing career, he was already something of a veteran in terms of his grasp of the essential flavour of the Carnatic idiom.

This reflected in a style of presentation that seemed to set him apart and made him lead the debate, as it were.

Over the years Sanjay Subrahmanyam has built a vast repertoire in all compositional forms of Carnatic music be they varnams, krithis , viruttams padams , javalis , bhajans ,folk , tillanas etc. covering all the four southern dialects and spanning modern and period composers. It must be said that Tamil, his mother tongue always received special emphasis and his efforts in engaging in intensive research and popularising ancient Tamil compositions are noteworthy.

Sanjay's choice and handling of ragas is always versatile especially his forays in the tricky terrain of vivadi mela ragas.

His ragam tanam pallavi presentations, the centerpiece of a major concert would always carry an element of surprise – the pallavi itself could be simple but laced with a witty and at times popular lyric drawn from any language including Hindustani. Alternatively it could be a major effort calling for control over the intricacies of tala and laya. His tanams are always special and graphic in the kind of riveting taans and bols which he created.

The cerebral force of his musicianship backed by hard training and constant search has helped him stay in contention at all times and keep his impressive flock of admirers wanting more.

Career Highlights

Sanjay began his concert career in 1986. He has had a vast performing experience giving concerts all over India. Some of his career highlights include:

1. Sanjay Subrahmanyam is most widely acclaimed top notch artiste world - wide and is a highly sought after musician during the December Music festival in Chennai, India, with around 17 concert bookings in a single month in one city.
2. Sanjay Subrahmanyam is the first Indian classical vocalist to be invited to perform in the prestigious Theatre De La Ville, in Paris during 1999 and has performed to sellout crowds of music lovers three times in this prestigious venue.
3. He was graded by the Prasar Bharathi as a “Top ranking” artiste and performs regularly on radio and television. Sanjay was selected to sing for the All India Radio Sangeeth Sammelan in Port Blair, Andamans in 1999, Visakapatnam, 2002, Jaipur in 2005, the National Programme of Music in Oct 2007, and for a special invited audience programme in AIR, Chennai, in connection with Deepavali in Oct 2008. Sanjay is an 'A Top' Grade artiste of All India Radio, Madras. (never mind the repeat of the word TOP twice as it is a rank given by the organizations).
4. Sanjay Subrahmanyam is a regular performer at the Navarathri Mandapam in Trivandrum every year and at the Swathi Sangeetholsavam Festival at the Kuthiramalika in Trivandrum. The former is one of the oldest musical festivals of Kerala wherein artistes of the likes of Semmangudi, who was a regular, has performed for 55 years continuously. Both festivals highlight the compositions of the Royal

composer Maharaja Swathi Thirunal and Sanjay's extensive and expanding repertoire in this domain is considered to be a valued asset by the organisers who have consistently invited him for the festivals year after year.

5. Sanjay has pioneered the digital distribution of music by uploading and offering his concerts through his website <http://www.sanjaysub.com> specifically on a "**Pay What You Want**" model. The venture has received overwhelming support and is reflective of the traditional model wherein classical arts was presented in temples and was literally crowd funded by passing the "plate" around and collecting whatever people were willing to offer the artiste. Sanjay Subrahmanyam is the first Indian musician to have adopted this model, in his pursuit to make his music accessible to the entire universe of music lovers.
6. Sanjay teaches music, and has many successful students such as Prashanth Viswanathan, Swarna Rethas, Sandeep Narayan, and Prasanna Venkatraman in the contemporary music field.
7. Sanjay has to his credit, numerous awards and performances in prestigious international forums. Important ones are listed in this document

Awards

Sanjay Subrahmanyam is a proud recipient of numerous awards. Notable and the most recent awards are listed below:

1. The most coveted Sangita Kalanidhi title conferred by the Music Academy Madras on January 1, 2016, among the youngest to receive this honour at the age of 47.
2. Proud recipient Sri Shanmukhananda National Eminence Award, a highest honor conferred by the Shanmukhanada Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha, December 6th 2014.
3. Sangeetha Chakravarthy title conferred by the South Indian Cultural Association (SICA), Hyderabad, November 2014.
4. Title of "Gaana Padhmam" from the Brahma Gana Sabha in December 2013
5. Naadha Kalanidhi - Shanmukhananda sabha, New Delhi, March 2013.
6. Isai Chelvam award - Mutthamizh Peravai, Chennai, in January 2012. This award was received from Kalaignar M Karunanidhi.
7. The GIMA MUSIC AWARDS 2012 for the GIMA Best Carnatic Album Classical- Vocal for his album Ellam Sivan Seyal. (2011 & 2012)
8. Indira Sivasailam Endowment Medal from the Indira Sivasailam Foundation and Music Academy, Chennai on 6 October 2011.
9. The title "Vani-kala-sudhakara" from Tyaga Brahma Gana Sabha in 2010.

10. The prestigious Kalaimamani award from the Tamil Nadu Government for the year 2006.
11. Best male singer during the Chennai Music Season for the years in 2006 and 2007 in a special survey conducted by IRC Wide Vision.
12. Sanskriti Award from the Sanskriti Prathishthan for performing arts in 1997.
13. Yogam Nagaswamy Award for a Senior vocalist - 1998, 2003, 2005 and 2009 & Best concert of the festival - 2004 & 2007 from the Music Academy – Chennai.
14. Won the first prize in the AIR competition held in 1986.

Overseas performances

Sanjay Subrahmanyam has travelled very widely and has performed in several cultural hubs of Europe, USA, Australia and in the Far East and the Middle East. As a youngster Sanjay started his overseas concert tours as early as 1993 when he performed in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia.

Sanjay has done several concert marathons in the US, Canada, Europe and Australia. Some of these include - a 30 concert marathon in 1995 when he toured Australia, US and Canada; a 26 concert tour of the US, Canada and Australia between March and June 2000; a 32 concert tour of Europe, USA and Canada.

Sanjay Subrahmanyam was the first Indian classical vocalist to be invited to perform in the prestigious Theatre De La Ville, in Paris during 1999, when he also performed at Caen, France, Utrecht & Leiden, Holland and Geneva and Zürich, Switzerland. Highlights include concerts at the Theatre de la ville in Paris, 5 concerts at different locations in Spain and Holland, participation in the cultural celebrations of the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics and the Silver Jubilee of the Cleveland Tyagaraja Festival.

Sanjay has engaged in several concert tours of the USA and Canada for over a decade now.

Some of the other important forums and festivals where Sanjay has performed include:

- The Cleveland Tyagaraja Aradhana Festival in the US in 1997, 1999, 2001, 2–5
- The South Indian Society, London in 1997
- The Raga Varsha in Oman, Muscat in 1998
- The Chicago Tyagaraja Utsavam in the US in 1998.
- The Cleveland, Chicago, Dayton, Houston and Connecticut Tyagaraja Festivals.

- Represented India in the la Marde Musicas festival at Cartagena, Spain in July 2003
- The Frankfurt Book Fair during Sept 2006
- Performed at the Sydney Music Festival 09 in Australia, during June 2009.

Audio/Video Releases

Sanjay Subrahmanyam has released several thematic albums and live concerts including a DVD of the December Season 2004 concert. Several audio cassettes and cds released for companies like AVM, Inreco, HMV, CDW, etc.

Sanjay Subrahmanyam Is the subject of a documentary film titled “Aaraar Aasaippadaar - Desired Melody” by filmmaker Prasanna Ramaswamy which was premiered at the Friday Features November Fest conducted by the national daily, The Hindu, in 2006. The film was selected to be screened at the Munich International film festival in June 2007. The film has also been released as a DVD by Charsur Digital Workstation in December 2007.

Academic Qualification

- Bachelor of Commerce - Vivekananda College, Chennai - 1989.
- Graduate Member of the Institute of Cost & Works Accountants of India (Grad CWA)
- Fellow Member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (FCA)

Undertook practice as a Chartered Accountant for a brief period and then quit to pursue music as a full time occupation.

Interests & Activities

1. Given many lectures and lecture-demonstrations on technical and general aspects of Carnatic music.
2. Written a wide range of articles in magazines, and the Internet to reach across to the initiated and the lay.
3. Nominated to the Sub group constituted by the Sangeet Natak Academy for recommending proposals for India’s cultural vision for the next 20 years, and the 10th Five Year Plan of the Government of India.

4. Former Secretary of YACM, (Youth Association for Classical Music) an institution that pioneered the youth revolution in Carnatic Music in the late Eighties and early Nineties.
5. Has his own podcast on the internet titled - The Sanjay Subrahmanyam Show.
6. Writes his own blog titled: Carnatic Music and anything else.

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