

## SRUTI BOX

## PVK's contribution to Odissi

I have been reading the overwhelming reactions to the excellent interview with the one and only P.V. Krishnamoorthy, published in the May issue of your magazine. I came to know Krishnamoorthy in the late 1950s when he became the Director of All India Radio, Cuttack. We were students, who with the help of professional artists—many from All India Radio (including Bhubaneswar Mishra, Balakrishna Das and Hariprasad Chaurasia)—staged the annual Kumar Utsav in Cuttack. It was quite amateurish but popular. When Krishnamoorthy came to Cuttack and found out about it, he extended all possible help from All India Radio and made arrangements for its live broadcast. This was a welcome move which later led to the festival being celebrated all over Odisha. P.V. Krishnamoorthy very rightly referred to it as the “cultural revolution amongst youth in Odisha”. He even composed the music for some dance-dramas staged every year, and needless to say, many of them, specially *Pancha Purnima* (based on local themes) were staged by many groups, for several years, even after PVK left Cuttack.

This was the time Odissi dance which had been restricted to Odisha, came to the notice of experts and a national audience, when I danced for the first time in the National Youth Festival in Delhi. This was followed by a long drawn process of convincing the stalwarts to obtain national recognition. Many, including PVK, who had a thorough understanding of the dance and music in Odisha,

gave us full support. It was in 1961 that I performed Odissi on Delhi Doordarshan due to the generosity of P.V. Krishnamoorthy who was the first Director General of Doordarshan. Many are not aware that Odissi blossomed under the active help and encouragement of people like him. I performed all over India in the 1950s and the early 1960s, till I went to the U.S.A. for my Ph. D in Zoology (at that time the question of taking up dance as a profession did not arise in our society). Graceful as he was and still is, he remembered my contribution as the vice-president of the Central Sangeet Natak Akademi and supported my nomination for the award in Odissi Dance in 1986. I thought I should bring this aspect of his support to Odissi in its struggling days, to notice over and above what has already been said about him.

The quality of musical productions improved substantially under his guidance. Incidentally, many of the signature tunes he composed for AIR, as he did for *Nari Mahal* or *Palli Shree* continue even today, which indicates how timeless these compositions are. As soon as we hear these tunes we think of P.V. Krishnamoorthy.

I feel privileged that I came to know P.V. Krishnamoorthy, a larger-than-life person, in the true sense of the word.

**Priyambada Mohanty Hejmadi**  
*Bhubaneswar*

## Corrections

This is regarding the article titled *A chronicle of collaboration* by Sriram V., published in the October

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issue of *Sruti* (pp. 46-47), reproduced from *The Hindu*. It is mentioned, “In the world of films too, there were productions set to Christian themes. Papanasam Sivan composed the music for a song in *Gnanasoundari*, (Citadel Pictures). This is incorrect. Papanasam Sivan and Kothamangalam Subbu supplied the lyrics and M.D. Parthasarathy, the music for Gemini’s *Gnanasoundari*. The film was a write-off and the essentially Carnatic music (of the film style) was not noticed.

Citadel’s successful version, with the hits by P.A. Periyanyaki, like *Arul tarum daiva mathave*, had lyrics/ music by Kambadasan/ S.V. Venkatraman (my recollection confirmed by K. Sundar of Ragapravaham). “The producer of this film was a Christian, Joseph Thaliath, and with his consent I did the tunes in a Christian hymnal style”—I was told by the composer many decades later.

**V.A.K. Ranga Rao**  
*Chennai*

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The article titled *Sruti and I* (pp. 30-33) was written by Sriram V.

