

Trichy Sankaran

master percussionist, composer

www.trichysankaran.com



Complete Bio

Born in the year 1942, Trichy Sankaran had his early musical training under his cousin **Sri P.A. Venkataraman**. He started at the age of 5, and became seriously involved with the art of drumming at the age of 7. When his first teacher Sri P.A.V. moved to Delhi from Trichy (Trichinappalli) to take up a job initially as a music instructor, and later to become the staff artist of All India Radio Delhi, Sankaran followed him for his musical studies. While in Delhi, Sankaran met **Pandit Ravi Shankar** for the first time, and played a solo in misra chapu tala for him at the age of 10 (year 1952). It was the same year that Sankaran won the gold medal from the Shankar's Weekly Children's Theatre Competition. Again, in the same year, he made his first public appearance (debut) performing with musicians in Harikathakalakshepam (religious discourse -narration with musical accompaniment).

Then Sankaran came under the direct tutelage of the legendary mrdangam maestro the late **Sri Palani Subramania Pillai**. Sankaran made his formal arangetram (musical debut) at the age of 13, in the year 1955, performing in tandem with **Sri Palani Subramania Pillai** in the concert of **Sri**

Alathoor Brothers, and **Sri Lalgudi G. Jayaraman**. This concert took place in Sankaran's home town Trichy at the famous Nanrudaian Pillayar Kovil (Ganesh temple). Sri Palani Subramania Pillai gave Sankaran unique opportunities to perform duos with him to many top rank Karnatak musicians of that time, that included artists such as **Ariyakkudi Ramanuja Iyengar**, **Chembai Vaidhyanatha Bhagavatar**, **Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer**, **Madurai Mani Iyer**, **G.N. Balasubramaniam**, **Alathoor Brothers**, **Mudikondan Venkatarama Iyer**, **Flute T.N. Swaminatha Pillai**, and others.

Sri Palani - Sankaran duet continued from 1955 to 1962, until May 1962, when Sri Pillai passed away. In fact Sankaran took the seat of Sri Pillai of his last concert accompanying the veteran singer **Sri Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer**.

Both in tandem with his guru, and on his own, Trichy Sankaran has accompanied all the top-ranking artists in the Karnatak field. In addition to being the most sought after successor to the style of Sri Palani Subramania Pillai, Sankaran has cultivated and infused new dimensions to the art of drumming, thus making his style innovative, yet traditional.

The forte of his style includes the most superior nadai calibration, subtle koraippu structure, innovative mora-korvai permutations, and his lyrical displays of rhythmic aesthetics in accompaniment and solos.

In January 2012, Dr. Sankaran received the most coveted honour of '**Sangita Kalanidhi**' from the prestigious Music Academy of Madras. He is the first recipient of this award in the Pudukkottai tradition of mrdangam playing.

To list some of the earlier awards, Professor Sankaran won the President's Award in 1958, and has been ranked A TOP by the panel of All India Radio. Subsequently Sankaran has won many awards including **Sangeeta Choodamani** by Sri Krishna Gana Sabha; **Sri Palghat Mani Iyer Award**; the title **Mrdanga Kala Shironmani** by the Percussive Arts Centre, Bangalore and **Vishwa Kala Bharathi** by Bharat Kalachar to name a few. He has been honoured by major Indian institutions in north America, including the **Professional of the Year Award** by the Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce, **Lifetime Achievement Award** by the Classical Arts Society of Houston, Tala Kalai Arasu (King of Rhythm) by the Bharathi Kalamamram, Toronto and Tala Vadya Prakasha by the Carnatic Music Association of North America, New York, among others.

In 1998 Sankaran was awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Music by the University of Victoria BC for his outstanding achievements in both the academic and professional fields.

His first concert trip abroad was to Shiraz, Iran when he performed at the International Music Festival, Persipolis Shiraz in the year 1969.

Among many notable concerts, a special jugalbandhi concert of North and South Indian music that was the most outstanding and memorable, in which Sankaran played with **Pandit Shanta Prasad** (tabla), **Vilayat Khan** (sitar), and **Lalgudi Jayaraman** (violin) in the year 1971 in Madras, deserves a special mention.

As a founder of the annual **Tyagaraja Festival** in Toronto, honouring the great South Indian saint-composer, Sankaran has worked closely with the Asian community and contributed in large measure to the growth and success of this Festival.

Sankaran's close artistic collaboration with a number of established Canadian Arts organization show his successful integration of Indian and mainstream Canadian culture through his creative compositions, performances, and participation in festival concerts.

Through his performances, compositions, and extensive collaborations, he has made an indelible mark on the Indian and Canadian musical establishments. This contribution is deepened through his important work in the fields of academic, teaching, and as a cultural ambassador. All of this work is imbued with his unique sense of mastery and total dedication to his art.

For additional information, please contact Prof. Sankaran through his website, www.trichysankaran.com