

Lalgudi GJR Krishnan and Lalgudi Vijayalakshmi – Short Bio

Lalgudi Krishnan and Lalgudi Vijayalakshmi belong to the fifth generation in the *sishya parampara* of the *Saint Tyagaraja*. Groomed by their grandfather Sri Lalgudi Gopala Iyer and father legendary violinist-composer Sri Lalgudi Jayaraman, the duo has imbibed the essence of the *Lalgudi bani* and enhanced it significantly by their own virtuosity and creativity.

Lalgudi Krishnan's music is noted for its sensitive tonality, spontaneity, tasteful exploration of *vivadi ragas*, innovative *kalpana svaras* replete with melody, intricate rhythmic patterning and innovative *korvais* acclaimed by veteran masters and contemporary musicians. Gifted with a fine sense of aesthetics, Lalgudi Vijayalakshmi's music is replete with *raga bhava* and *saukhyam*. Vijayalakshmi's raga essays instantly capture the essence and soul of the raga, with a freshness of perspective in every exposition. Pandit Ravi Shankar himself once observed, 'You have your father's fingers'.

Krishnan and Vijayalakshmi are best known for their scintillating violin duet concerts, marked by pristine classicism and musical dignity, exquisite melody and intricate rhythm, deep intellect, refreshing creativity, instrumental virtuosity, wide repertoire, interesting and stimulating pallavis, engaging impromptu raga and swara repartees. Though they are both torch bearers of the Lalgudi bani, their styles are distinct and contrasting, complementing each other and thus enhancing the beauty and concert experience. They also perform solos, where audiences get to enjoy their respective individual styles. They use their commendable violin virtuosity to project *artha bhava* and *raga bhava* rather than to showcase instrumental skill for its own sake.

Krishnan has also provided violin accompaniment to legendary musicians of yesteryear. He made a choice to move away from accompaniment to focus exclusively on solos and duets. Vijayalakshmi has shared the stage as an accompanist with many contemporary stalwarts, and continues to do so.

As a composer Krishnan has worked with many dancers in successful dance productions such as *Jagat Pavani Ganga*, *Sai Nathane Varuga Varuga*. Vijayalakshmi has composed beautifully structured and mellifluous varnams and thillanas. She has also provided lilting musical forms to works of Adi Sankara, Mahakavi Bharathiyar, Shuddhananda Bharati. Her orchestral piece *Panchabhootham* was staged by high school students in Dallas, USA. Krishnan and Vijayalakshmi have also collaborated on many projects, like *Raga Rasa*, an orchestral work for instrumental ensembles, and full-length dramas *Sambhavami Yuge Yuge* and *Oozh: The Divine Destiny*.

Krishnan and Vijayalakshmi have each collaborated in Jugalbandhis with leading Hindustani musicians. These jugalbandhis are a treat as Krishnan and Vijayalakshmi blend seamlessly with the Hindustani idiom while staying true to their Carnatic identity. Vijayalakshmi's efforts in collaboration include *Violin-Venu-Veena*.

Their creativity has also found expression in many poems on nature and other subjects, some of which have been tuned and presented by the duo.

Under *Lalgudi Trust*, Krishnan undertook *ViolinWise*, a path breaking initiative, where world class training was provided to aspiring Indian luthiers. This has made top quality violin making and repair skills available in India, and addressed a major gap. Under her trust *Krutagnya*, Vijayalakshmi has conducted many events to provide a platform for young and budding violinists, and spread awareness of music. The siblings have been using their trusts to raise funds and contribute their mite to charity.

Krishnan and Vijayalakshmi have both been honoured with many awards over the years, notably Sangeetha Choodamani from Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, Kalaimamani from the Tamil Nadu State Govt, Indira Sivasailam Endowment Medal from the Indira Sivasailam Foundation and The Music Academy, National Eminence award from Sri Shanmukhananda Sabha, Mumbai, Sangeetha Rathnakara, Cleveland Thyagaraja Aradhana. They were both jointly honoured with the prestigious Sangita Kalanidhi award for 2022 by The Music Academy, Chennai. Besides, Krishnan is a recipient of the Sangeet Natak Akademi award.

The duo have been teaching many young and aspiring violinists with dedication and commitment, and also sharing their knowledge and experience through workshops and lecture demonstrations.