

# MARGI

TWENTY SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT – YEAR ENDING 31.3.1998

## THE MARGI KALIYOGAM

### KATHAKALI

Margi is functioning as a Kaliyogam from 1994-95. The important features of the Kaliyogam system are:

1. Grading of artistes under different categories like Upadeshtavu, Adyasthanam, Onnamkida, Idatharam and Kuttitharam as against the old system of Teachers and Stipendiaries, who were paid only stipends for 10 months in the year and had to leave the institution on completion of the time bound course like 4 years, 6 years etc. This led them nowhere and the stipendiaries had to leave the profession altogether for want of continued training and performance opportunities.
2. Continuous training and performance side by side throughout the life time of the artistes and staying together as a well knit cohesive unit, which leads to high level production values.
3. This system is one most suited to restore the arts to their former glory by enabling revivals, creative elaboration through a poetic treatment, etc.
4. There is constant challenge to the creative talents of the artistes in every production and performance.

The artistes get training in the higher aspects of the art on a continuing basis; the themes for study are mention below.

### Nalacharitha series.

The late Shri D.Appukuttan Nair developed staging of Nalacharitha into a newformat altogether. This magnum opus of Kathakali has infinite theatrical scope; drawing upon the related literature and developing the sequences, giving emphasis to the poetic aspects of this all time great literary creation. Shri D.A.Nair did an immense amount of research on this and wrote down a very detailed performance manual. According to this format, Nalacharitha 1<sup>st</sup> day itself will take about 12 days to complete.

The performance manuals for days 1 and 2 have already been printed by Margi and is available for the use of art lovers. Day 3 is being printed.

Nalacharitham day 2 was staged in the elaborate Margi format during the year (vide list of Programmes).

Another programme of Margi, as may be well known by now, is the presentation of currently popular themes (usually presented as abridged versions lasting anything between 45 minutes to 3 hours) in their entirety, as conceived and intended by the playwright. This takes a long session of successive stagings to complete a play. In the process, creative interpretations are also added to such sections of the play which provide the required scope for such poetic embellishments and elaboration. In this format, each session is a new presentation, a creative challenge for actor, singer and percussionist alike to continuously hone their respective creative talents and greatly helps to revitalise the art.

'Ravanolbhavam' was rehearsed and performed in full during the year.

#### Koodiyattom & Nangiarkoothu with support from the Kendra Sangeet Nataka Akademi

The weekly Koodiyattom shows, as per ongoing programme of support by the Kendra Sangeet Nataka Akademy, continued during the year. This is the seventh year of the SNA supported scheme and 48 programs were staged during the year, covering a wide range; drawing from the vast repertoire built up in Margi during the previous years. (Please see list of programs). There was significant achievement in taking this art to a wider audience. Programs staged in the city colleges were very successful in spreading the art among the younger generation of lovers of classical theatre.

Another welcome sign is the demand for staging of Koodiyattom in several temples in South Kerala such as Sree Krishna Temple, Kottarakkara; Bhagavathy temple, Mullakkal, Alleppey; Sree Mahadever Temple, Sathamangalam, Trivandrum etc. (Though Koodiyattom is essentially a temple art, it never found a place in temple festivals; particularly in South Kerala). The response was very encouraging and more temple programmes are likely to be staged in the coming years; a true sign of revival of this ancient art form.

#### *Programmes staged during the year*

*Kathakali* 15 Programmes were staged during the year at Trivandrum and about 75 programmes in various temples, mostly in South Kerala.

*Koodiyattom* 48 programmes were staged under the support scheme of Kendra Sangeet Natak Akademi (vide list of programmes appended)

## **RECOGNITION AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL**

The programmes staged at Margi were invariably watched by a good number of foreign tourists; Particularly during the tourist season. The tourists consisted of both casual visitors as well as theatre persons. While the former were very much impressed by the power and depth of the histrionics of Koodiyattom, the latter kept coming back to know more about the finer aspects of the art.

The weekly programmes are being video taped regularly by a German professor for purpose of study in the Sanskrit and Indology Department of the University of Tubingen (Germany).

During 1996-97 two Koodiyattom artistes from India viz. Margi, Madhu and Unnikrishnan Nambiar (Mizhavu) were featured in an International Cross Cultural theatre venture at Bellagio Centre in Italy (September 1997) (The other artistes were two each from Japan, Korea, Indonesia, Bali). The artistic direction was by eminent theatre persons from the Noh theatre of Japan. The programme was staged again at several venues in the U.S. including the prestigious Kennedy Centre in Washington during June 1997. "Dragon Bond Rite" was a great success at the international level and further stagings are scheduled to take place in the Hong Kong festival during early November 1998.

Another noted theatre group titled 'Theatre work' based at Singapore (artistic Director Mr. Ong Keng Sen) visited Margi during December 1997. They watched the rigorous training schedules of Koodiyattom and Kathakali and interacted with the artistes. They were very much impressed by the theatre potential of both Kathakali and Koodiyattom for being featured in fusion of arts festivals at the global level.

Two Koodiyattom artistes are to take part in their forthcoming production titled "Flying Circus Project 1998" featuring also artistes from Korea and Myanmar. The venture includes a month long series of workshops, seminars and performances at Singapore during December 1998.

### **CD – ROM on Kerala – The Green Symphony**

Margi Kathakali and Koodiyattam artistes are featured in the "Culture and Heritage" section of an 8 hour long CD – ROM covering all aspects of Kerala aimed at promotion of International Tourism.

## **INCREASE IN GOVERNMENT GRANT**

The grant to the Margi Kaliyogam from 1994-95 onwards is Rs.5 Lakhs. This amount is meant for paying of salaries to 42 artistes. Naturally the salaries are far below fair living wages. (The highest salary for artistes who have put in more than 20 years' service in Margi is a paltry Rs.1800 PM; the lowest Rs.750 PM)

With such low salaries and without any increase for the last 4 years, the artistes were in great difficulty. Proposals were submitted to Government for enhancement of grant for consideration by a committee constituted by Government for the purpose. The grant proposed by Margi to the Committee was Rs.12 Lakhs; to enable a fair increase in the salary of the artistes (atleast to the level of Rs.4000 PM for the senior artistes).

We are glad to state that the budget provision for Margi for 1998-99 has raised to Rs.10 Lakhs. The committee would like to place on record our deep sense of gratitude, as also of the artistes of Margi, to the Government.

## **GOVERNMENT OF INDIA GRANT**

The Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Culture was kind enough to extend grant assistance to Margi. The assistance, which was available to 6 artistes from 1994-95, has been raised to 12 artistes from 1997-98. The Committee's sincere thanks to the Government of India is hereby placed on record.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Committee would like to acknowledge its deep debt of gratitude to the Government of Kerala, Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Culture; the Central Sangeet Natak Akademi; The Indian Council for Cultural Relations and the Travancore Devasom Board.

Our sincere thanks are due to the Press in General and in particular the leading papers like Malayala Manorama, Mathrubhumi, Kerala Kaumudi, The Hindu, The Indian Express etc. for their regular coverage of the programmes of Margi.

In conclusion our sincere thanks are also due to all the members of Margi for their unstinted co-operation.

*Dr.A.D.Damodaran*  
Secretary

Thiruvananthapuram  
22nd June 1998

## LIST OF PROGRAMMES STAGED AT TRIVANDRUM DURING 1997-98

### Kathakali

1. 24.6.97 Nalacharitham, Day 2, Part 1
2. 25.6.97 Ravanolbhavam Part I
3. 21.7.97 Banayudhom Part 1
4. 22.7.97 Banayudhom Part 11  
(D.A.Nair commemorative programme held at Theerthapadamantapam)
5. 14.8.97 'Guru Dinam' observance meeting in memory of late Kalamandalam Krishnan Nair; followed by Kathakali Poothanamoksham
6. 26.8.97 Nalacharitham, Day 2, Part 2
7. 27.8.97 Ravanolbhavam Part 2
8. 27.10.97 Nalacharitham, Day 2, Part 3
9. 28.10.97 Ravanolbhavam Part 3
10. 26.11.97 Nalacharitham Day 2, Part 4
11. 27.11.97 Ravanolbhavam, Part 4
12. 30.12.97 Nalacharitham, Day 2, Part 5
13. 31.12.97 Ravanolbhavam, Part 5
14. 20.1.98 Nalacharitham Day 2, Part 6
15. 21.1.98 Keechakavadhom

- Note
1. In addition, about 75 programmes covering almost all Kathakali plays in popular demand, were staged in various temples and other important venues out side Trivandrum.
  2. Individual artistes like Margi Vijayakumar presented lecture – demonstrations in Kathakali in a number of centres in New Delhi, Jullundur etc. under the auspices of SPIC – MACAY.

## LIST OF PROGRAMMES STAGED DURING 1997-98

### Koodiyattom

1. 8.4.97 Chakiarkoothu – “Panchaliswayamvaram” by Margi Madhu followed by Subhadradhananjayam Act I – episode ‘Chala Kuvalayam’ at Sree Krishna Temple, Kottarakkara
2. 9.4.97 Nangiarkoothu by Margi Usha at Sree Krishna Temple, Kottakkara
3. 22.4.97 Nangiarkoothu by Margi Sathi at Sree Lakshmana Temple, Moozhikulam
4. 23.4.97 Subhadra Dhananjayam Act I – Chalakuvalayam; also at Lakshmana Temple, Moozhikulam
5. 27.5.97 Chakiarkoothu – ‘Kiratham’ by Guru Kochu Kuttan Chakiar
6. 28.5.97 Subhadra Dhananjayam Act I – ‘Ambastanyam’ by Raman
7. 6.6.97 Nangiarkoothu
8. 7.6.97 Subhadra Dhananjayam Act I – Arjuna’s Nirvahanam
9. 13.6.97 Nangiarkoothu
10. 17.6.97 Ascharya Choodamani Act III – ‘Mayaseethankom’ Nataka Bhaga
11. 18.6.97 Bhasa’s Abhisheka – ‘Thoranyuddhom’ at Devi Temple, Bharanikkavu (Kollam District)
12. 30.6.97 Act III of Bhasa’s Pratijna Yougandharayanam – ‘Mantrankom’ at University Centre, Kariyavattom
13. 11.7.97 Act III of Bhasa’s Pratija Yougandharayanam – ‘Mantrankom’
14. 18.7.97 Nangiarkoothu
15. 23.7.97 Ascharya Choodamani Act VII – Agnipravesankom – Drama part (D.A.Nair commemorative programme held at Theerthapadamantapam)
16. 29.7.97 Ascharya Choodamani Act III – ‘Mayaseethankom’
17. 8.8.97 Ascharya Choodamani Act VII – ‘Agnipravesankom’ – Commencement of second cycle of the Margi revival with Vidhyadharan and Soudamini (entry)
18. 22.8.97 Nangiarkoothu by Margi Sathi at Sree Krishna Temple, Punnappuram

19. 23.8.97 Subhadra Dhananjayam Act I – 'Chalakuvalayam' at Sree Krishna Temple, Evoor.
20. 29.8.97 Bhasa's Pratijna Yougandharayanam Act III – 'Mantraonkom' – Rakshasolpathi.
21. 5.9.97 Ascharya Choodamani Act VII – 'Agni pravesankom' Day 2 (Vidyadharan & Soudhamini – aerial scene)
22. 8.9.97 Nangiarkoothu
23. 26.9.97 Ascharya Choodamani Act VII - 'Agni Pravesankom' - Day 3 Entry of Jambhavan
24. 28.9.97 Ascharya Choodamani Act VII - 'Agni Pravesankom' - Day 4 Entry of Sree Raman
25. 17.10.97 Nangiarkoothu
26. 20.10.97 Ascharyachoodamani Act VII – 'Agni pravesankom' - Day 4 Nirvahanam (Recapitulation) of Sree Rama (1)
27. 24.10.97 Ascharyachoodamani Act VII – 'Agni pravesankom' - Day 4 (Recapitulation) Sree Raman's Nirvahanam(2)
28. 31.10.97 Ascharyachoodamani Act VII – 'Agni pravesankom' - Day 4 Nirvahanam (Recapitulation) of Sri Rama(3)
29. 1.11.97 Nangiarkoothu at Saraswathi Vidyalaya – Vattiyoorkkavu
30. 7.11.97 Nangiarkoothu
31. 14.11.97 Ascharyachoodamani Act VII – 'Agni Pravesankom' - Day 7 Entry of Vibhishana
32. 21.11.97 Ascharyachoodamani Act VII – 'Agni Pravesankom' - Day 8 Nataka bhaga
33. 6.12.97 Subhadra Dhananjayam Act I – 'Chalakuvalayam' at Pothencode Kathakali Club
34. 12.12.97 Ascharyachoodamani Act VII – 'Agni Pravesankom' - Day 9 Drama Part
35. 15.12.97 Nangiarkoothu at Womens' college, Trivandrum (Margi Sathi)
36. 25.12.97 Bhasa's Abhisheka – 'Thoranyuddhom' at Bhagavathy Temple, Mullakkal, Alleppey.
37. 3.1.98 Ascharyachoodamani, Act VII – 'Agni pravesankom' - Day 10

38. 16.1.98 Bhasa's Abhisekha Nataka – 'Thoranyuddom' at Mahadever Temple, Sasthamangalam.
39. 20.1.98 Nangiarkoothu at NSS College for women, Karamana by Margi Sathi.
40. 24.1.98 Bhasa's Pratijnayoughandarayanam Act III – 'Mantronkom' – Raksholpathi at Theerthapada Mantapam
41. 6.2.98 Ascharyachoodamani Act III Mayaseethankom, Nataka Bhaga
42. 7.2.98 Nangiarkoothu
43. 14.2.98 Ascharyachoodamani Act VII – 'Agni Pravesankom' Day 11, Natakabhaga
44. 17.2.98 Bhasa's Pratija Yougandharayanam Act III – 'Mantronkom' at Theerthapada Mantapam
45. 16.3.98 Ascharyachoodamani Act VII – 'Agni Pravesankom' Day 12 Entry of Narada – at Theerthapada Mantapam
46. 19.3.98 Nangiarkoothu at Trikkariyoor Mahadever Temple, Kothamangalam
47. 29.3.98 Nangiarkoothu at Sree Krishna Temple, Kottarakkara
48. 30.3.98 Koodiyattom – 'Subhadra Dhananjayam' at Sree Krishna Temple, Kottarakkara.