



A Complete Artist: S. Rajam

Radel is honoured to felicitate Vidwan Sangeetha Kala Acharya Sri.S.Rajam on his 90th birthday, which was celebrated recently. This multifaceted personality is an inspiration to all of us.

Sri.Rajam was born on 10.02.1919 to Sri.V.Sundaram Iyer and his wife Smt.Chellammal. His father was a reputed advocate and a great scholar in Carnatic music. Sri.Rajam's own genius and the environment at home attracted him to not one, but several art forms: Drawing, Painting, and Music. He also acted on stage and in a few early films.

Music: Sri.Rajam had some of the greatest musicians and composers as his teachers: Ambi Dikshitar, Papanasam Sivan, Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavathar, Ariyakkudi Ramanuja Iyengar, Madurai Mani Iyer and many others. Sri Rajam started performing concerts from a very young age of thirteen. He won the first prize at the first ever music competition organised by the Music Academy, Chennai in 1931.

While working for Akashvani, Sri.Rajam recorded rare songs of Vaggeyakars, and produced many operas and musicals. He has sung and brought out a series of cassettes to popularise the 72 Melakarta Kritis of Koteeswara Iyer. He has performed all over India and across the globe. He is a member of the expert committee of The Music Academy. Sri.Rajam is a teacher *nonpareil* and has trained several students. His uninhibited, free-flowing imagination creates ragas and kalpana swara patterns that stand out for their spontaneity and creativity. It is this innovative mind that prompted him to become one of the earliest users of the Radel Sruti box and tambura. Frank and outspoken, he would express his views boldly to those who opposed the use of electronic musical instruments. Till today, he continues to be our honoured customer.

Art: At the age of fifteen Sri.Rajam developed his drawing skill. He joined The School of Arts and furthered his skills. He is a reputed traditional painter. His paintings have been used in several publications, the latest of which was the L&T calendar of 2008 with the 72 Melakartas as its theme.

Theatre and Cinema: Sri Rajam acted in several operas in his youth. He was one of the first heroes of Tamil cinema. He acted in 'Seetha Kalyanam' (1933). He sang while acting in 'Radha Kalyanam', the music director for this film being the renowned Sri Muthaiah Bhagavathar.

Sri Rajam has been on the editorial committee of Sruti Magazine to which he has contributed scholarly articles on raga lakshana discussions, as well as his art.

Sri Rajam has been honoured with many awards - the Sangeet Natak Academy award, Sangita Kala Acharya award from the Music Academy, Chennai & the Isai Kalai Chemmal award.

Radel offers respectful pranaams to Sri Rajam and wishes him many more years of fruitful service to Indian music and Art.