



GENERAL

Digital Release of 'An Ode to the Tanjore Quartet - A Traditional Margam'

January 5, 2025

Chennai: Tanjore Quartet Margam Digital release – working through the raging COVID times this unique production aims at preserving the majesty of the dance compositions, which combine an intense knowledge of Carnatic music and Bharatanatyam of the Tanjore quartet illustrious brothers that form the Bharatanatyam repertoire, the crescendo to our glorious artistic heritage.

The digital release of 'An Ode to the Tanjore Quartet - A Traditional Margam' presented by Kalaimamani Bala Devi Chandrashekar was released by Chief Guest Kalaimamani Nandini Ramani (SNA Awardee and Executive Board Member, Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi) and Nalli Kuppuswami Chetti along with Guest of Honors K.N. Ramaswamy (Director, Bhavan Chennai Kendra) and Kalaimamani Priya Murle (President of ABHAI) at TAG Dakshinamurthy Hall, Mylapore Chennai.

Speaking on the occasion, Kalaimamani Bala Devi Chandrashekar, said "This production seeks to honour and preserve the grandeur of dance compositions that form the core of the Bharatanatyam repertoire. These compositions, created by the illustrious Tanjore Quartet brothers, showcase a profound mastery of both Carnatic music and Bharatanatyam. This is a traditional Bharatanatyam Margam, continuing the Nritya Upachara series. This innovative project aims to spark a new Renaissance in the understanding of traditional Bharatanatyam, as developed by the renowned Tanjore Quartet. Under the guidance of Nandini Ramani, the production highlights specific compositions by the four brothers, Adi Ponniah, Chinniah, Vadivelu, and Sivanandam."

The "Ode to the Tanjore Quartet" is a digital presentation of a traditional Bharatanatyam Margam, continuing the Nritya Upachara series. This production aims to create a new Renaissance in understanding traditional classical Bharatanatyam, as evolved by the famous Tanjore Quartet brothers. The project, guided by Guru Nandini Ramani, showcases specific compositions of the illustrious brothers Adi Ponniah, Chinniah, Vadivelu, and Sivanandam, who were court musicians trained under the renowned Carnatic musician Sri Muthuswamy Dikshitar.

The Margam follows the traditional format codified by the Tanjore Quartet, considered the lifeline of a Bharatanatyam performance. It includes a series of items such as Alarippu, Jatisvaram, Shabdham, Varnam, Padam, Javali, and Tillana, each designed to showcase different aspects of pure and interpretative dance. The presentation adheres to this order to preserve and propagate the values of the Margam-based Bharatanatyam recital, which is meant to be solo dancing according to ancient treatises and oral tradition.

This production features compositions in both Tamil and Telugu, reflecting the linguistic diversity of the Tanjore court. The centerpiece of the recital is the Varnam, a challenging item that combines pure and interpretative dance, set to a composition by Sivanandam of the Tanjore Quartet. Other notable pieces include a Shabdham addressing Lord Krishna, a Keertanam devoted to Lord Brihadeeshwara, and a Tillana composed by Adi Chinnaya.

