



**Dr. PREMEELA GURUMURTHY**

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Dr. Premeela Gurumurthy made her debut in the field of music at the age of 14 giving her maiden performance where Sangita Kalanidhi Musiri Subramania Iyer was the Guest of Honour who advised a career of music.

She received advanced training in Karnatic music from T.K. Govinda Rao, Mudicondan Venkatarama Iyer, B. Rajam Iyer, T.M. Tyagarajan, Dr.S. Ramanathan, Smt. K.R. Lakshmi, Kallidaikurichi Mahadeva Bhagavathar and T. Muktha.

She Graduated in music from Queen Mary's College, Chennai and won the University Prize for practical music in the year 1974 at the University Convocation. Later she completed her Postgraduation in Indian Philosophy at the Centre of Advanced study in Philosophy and also qualified for another Masters Degree in Indian music at the Department of Indian Music, both at the University of Madras.

Her doctorate entitled "Kathakalakshepa - A study" dealing with musical discourses of different states of India enabled her for the award of a National Scholarship by the Department of Culture, Government of India. Dr. S. Seetha, the former Professor and Head of the Department of Music, University of Madras was her Guide. Her thesis available as a Book today is hailed as the only well documented work on this artform and is highly acclaimed by scholars and researchers.

Premeela while working on her doctorate also learnt to perform the traditional Harikatha from Smt. C. Banni Bai and performed Rukmini Kalyanam organized by the Max Mueller Bhavan where Banni Bai was the Guest of Honour. Sangita Kalanidhi Embar S. Vijayaraghavachariyar also taught her the rudiments of the art along with its history and related concepts. Her field study in many states of India enabled her to interview and get to know the veterans of this artform.

She learnt Hindustani Classical Vocal Music from Sri Krishnanand who belonged to the Kirana Gharana founded by Ustad Abdul Karim Khan. Her first Hindustani Classical



concert was performed in 1984 which was presided over by Sangita Kalanidhi Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer. The greatest tribute comes from this Doyen of Music.

"Premeela sings both Karnatic and Hindustani music in their distinct styles and purity achieving the great task of not mixing them".

She learnt light Classical Hindustani Music from Sri P.S. Srinivasa Rao which enabled her add to her repertoire, the Ashtapadis of Jayadeva, Bhajans of Mira, Surdas, Tulsidas and Kabirdas along with some Marathi Abhangs.

Premeela has made a special study of the ancient Tamil musical forms like the Tevaram, Divya Prabhandam, Tiruppugazh etc., featuring each type in the form of full time concerts. To this can be added the compositions of Gopala Krishna Bharathi, Ramalinga Swamigal, Papanasam Sivan and Perisamy Theoran.

She has released many Audio cassettes and CDs consisting of the Songs of Sadasiva Brahmendra, Tyagaraja and Arutpa songs of Ramalinga Swamigal.

She has performed at the Music Academy, Tamil Isai Sangam, Indian Fine Arts Society, Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, Narada Gana Sabha, Ramalinga Pani Mandram and other institutions in and around Madras.

She has also participated in many Lecture demonstrations presented by T.S. Parthasarathy, a noted Musicologist and former Secretary of the Music Academy, by way of singing compositions of Saint composers in different languages such as Sanskrit, Telugu, Kannada and Hindi.

Eminent musicians like Musiri Subramania Iyer, Chittoor Subramania Pillai, Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar, Papanasam Sivan, Professor Sambamurthy, T.K. Rangachari, Mudicondan Venkatarama Iyer, Seergazhi S. Govindarajan and Dr. S. Ramanathan have listened to her concerts and showered their blessings.



As a Scholar she has presented Research papers in many Seminars and has also published books and articles in noted journals. Her books such as Kathakalakshepa - a study, Nellai thantha Isai Manigal (Tamil), Gopalakrishnan Bharathi (Tamil), Delhi Sahitya Academy Publication, Ghanaragapancharatnas of Tyagaraja (English) and Musings of Music (Madras University Publication -150<sup>th</sup> Year) have been well received.

She has performed concerts, lec-dems and musical discourses (Tamil and English) in U.S.A. Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Singapore, London, Muscat, Hong Kong and Mauritius.

She joined as a lecturer in the Dept of Indian Music, University of Madras in 1984 and became a Reader, Professor and later the Head, Chairperson and President of the School of Fine and Performing Arts in 2003. She is a member of the Senate and Academic Council. In the year 2007 she was nominated as a Member of the Syndicate for a period of three years by the Governor of Tamil Nadu, His Excellency Sri S.S. Barnala.

Premeela after assuming the headship has introduced two M.A. programmes viz Bharathanatyam and Rhythmology in the department. She has also initiated and introduced a five year integrated twin major course entitled M.A. Natya consisting of Bharathanatyam and Dramaturgy.

Under the University Industry Community Interaction Centre (UICIC) she designed and introduced six months Certificate courses in Karnatic Music, Hindustani Music, Western Music and for Hari utha and Bhajana. She also has designed a P.G. diploma Course entitled Art Appreciation and Heritage Studies.

Her husband R.Gurumurthy, is the son of Sangeet Natak Academy Awardee S.Rajam, well known musician and artiste of fame. Both she and her husband have documented the 72 mela compositions of Kotiswara Iyer sung by Sri S. Rajam in the form of Audio Cassettes and CDs for posterity.



#### APPRECIATIONS

Gifted with a melodious voice Dr. Premeela sings with ease and scholarship and her concerts are well received. I have been very keenly watching her progress and training both in the academic and music fields of study. I am confident that, given an opportunity, Dr. Premeela will popularize our traditional forms of music to people all over.

*Dr.N.Mahalingam*

Premeela is endowed with an ardent love and aptitude for music. Besides, she possesses a good voice that blends with sruti and has acquired a fine repertoire of songs in different languages.

*Dr.S. Seetha*

She sings both Carnatic and Hindustani with equal facility and is gifted with a voice of great sweetness and musical power. Premeela's akara phrases showed her complete control over her voice and the rigorous practice she has put in.

*T.S.Parthasarathy*

M. Premeela gave a rendering of some ashtapadis with uninhibited, full throated ease, soulful and self relishing.

*R.R. Indian Express.*

Dr. M. Premeela of Madras enthralled the audience with a soulful and melodious vocal recital. She presented the best of Thiagarajah, Syama Sastri and Muthuswami Dikshidar in grand style, true to the traditions of her illustrious gurus. Her tonal modulations and the articulate expressions were full of aesthetic excellence.

*News Time, Tenali.*

Premeela is a versatile artiste. She is blessed with a melodious voice. She plans her programmes well and with understanding of her audience. Her concerts are very scholarly and pleasing.

*Malayala Manorama.*

A sumptuous tone seemed to be M.Premeela's asset.

*N.M.N. The Hindu*

Harikambodi received a very eloquent treatment from Dr. M. Premeela, who has cultivated her voice assiduously to reach a wide range.

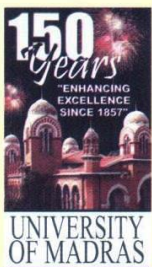
*D.V.V. The Hindu*

Premeela is a good student of Music. Her scholarship and training have made her a good performer in both Hindustani and Carnatic concert programmes. Her devotion to music is further proved in the artupas she has recorded.

*Dr. S.Ramanathan*

I am happy to have heard Dr. Premeela's lecture demonstration on Harikatha. Her talk was very interesting. Her singing was very good and she has learnt the art well. I extend my congratulations to her.

*K. Chandrasekaran*



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