

THE HINDU

Online edition of India's National Newspaper
Friday, Mar 24, 2006

Google™

[Find 1/2 BHK in Chennai](#)

Find Apartments / Flats For Sale From Top Builders in Chennai



[Home Loan Rates \(Apr2011\)](#)

What is the current interest rate? Which bank gives the best rate?

Ads by Google

Friday Review Chennai and Tamil Nadu

Published on Fridays

Ads by Google

Music

Download
Enhanced Internet
Explorer 9 with
Bing and MSN.
www.ie9enhanced.com

Flats in Chennai

Residential
Houses on Sell in
Chennai at
Affordable Rates!
www.getit.in/Aadezine-Stt

**Apartments near
Velachery**

Upcoming Chennai
IT corridor Great
price at Rs. 3,499
per Sft
Arthaproperty.com/Creati

Tata Nano

Now Less than Rs
3000*/month Drive
Home Nano
Today!
www.Tatananocampaigns

Features: [Magazine](#) | [Literary Review](#) | [Life](#) | [Metro Plus](#) | [Open Page](#) | [Education Plus](#) | [Book Review](#) | [Business](#) | [SciTech](#) | [Friday Review](#) | [Young World](#) | [Property Plus](#) | [Quest](#) | [Folio](#) |

[Friday Review](#) [Bangalore](#) [Chennai and Tamil Nadu](#) [Delhi](#) [Hyderabad](#)
[Thiruvananthapuram](#)

**Musiri for bhava**

As Musiri Subramania Iyer sang "Nagumomu," one could picture Tyagaraja begging Rama for a vision.



Musiri Subramania Iyer with a disciple.

Musiri Subramania Iyer was an icon in the field of Carnatic music. Born in 1899, he learnt music from Karur Chinnaswami Iyer and T. S. Sabhesa Iyer and had his concert debut at the age of 19. From then on, it was a steady climb to the top and he remained there for the rest of his life, despite retiring from the concert platform in the 1940s. He remained a respected elder statesman in the field of arts and his passing was considered a great loss when it occurred on March 24, 1975.

Archives
● [Datewise](#)

Classified
● [Lead](#)
● [Cinema](#)
● [Film Review](#)
● [Music](#)
● [Dance](#)
● [Theatre](#)
● [Arts & Crafts](#)
● [Heritage](#)
● [Miscellany](#)

News
[News Update](#)
[Front Page](#)
[National](#)
States:
● [Tamil Nadu](#)
● [Andhra Pradesh](#)
● [Karnataka](#)
● [Kerala](#)
● [New Delhi](#)
● [Other States](#)
[International](#)
[Opinion](#)
[Business](#)
[Sport](#)
[Miscellaneous](#)
[Index](#)

Advts
[Classifieds](#)
[Jobs](#)
[Obituary](#)

"Musiri Subramania Aiyar dead" ran *The Hindu* headline. The article stated that he was a "singer of peerless popularity for about four decades" and "had contributed his best to raising the prestige of professional musicians." The second statement was no idle tribute, for as Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, Musiri's close friend was fond of saying, Musiri had imparted "gauravam" or prestige to Carnatic music. This was largely because, music apart, Musiri was dignity personified in personal life and being extremely proficient in English, could move with ease with the highest in the land. Business leaders such as Ramnath Goenka, `Paterson' K. S. Vaidyanathan, `Jupiter'" Ranganathan and `Chitra' Narayanaswami, ICS officers such as C. V. Narasimhan, G. Venkateswaran, S. Venkateswaran and S. Y. Krishnaswami, legal eagles such as V. L. Ethiraj and Union Cabinet Minister T. T. Krishnamachari all took pride in claiming Musiri to be their friend. C. V. Narasimhan was also his disciple. Among musicians, Musiri was the first to build a bungalow on the prestigious Oliver Road of Mylapore and was also one of the first to possess a car.

The Hindu went on to state that "Bhava was the keynote of his music represented by a leisurely portrayal of the raga. While singing, he identified himself with the spirit of the composition. He was one of those musicians who could invest their music with emotional appeal." The article exemplified the above statement citing three songs — "Nagumomu," "Tiruvadi Charanam" and "Enraikku Sivakripai."

Perhaps it was "Nagumomu" that Musiri was most associated with. As he sang it, one could picture Tyagaraja begging his Rama for a vision and each line dripped with emotion. As Musiri progressed with the song, he deliberated on each line and appeared to invest them with fresh interpretations. No wonder that a Kalki Krishnamurthy review of his concert was once simply titled, "Gagana" which is a key word in the charanam of "Nagumomu."

Musiri's contributions to the Tyagaraja aradhana at Tiruvayyaru were also highlighted in the same article, for he played a key role in the unification of several factions and also served as Secretary of the Aradhana Committee.

Sense of humour

The article spoke of Musiri's humour. A single anecdote, which he himself was fond of repeating, would suffice. Once, Musiri and several other vidwans had assembled at a village for a wedding. While playing cards in the afternoon, Musiri felt thirsty and woke up his host's cook and asked for some warm water. The old woman, annoyed at having been disturbed in her siesta, muttered loud enough for him to hear "Does he think he is M. S. Subbulakshmi? Why does he need warm water?"

The Hindu article listed most of the awards that Musiri won, but strangely left out his having been president of the Music Academy's annual



Take a
small step
to get
healthy.

To learn more visit

SMALLSTEP.GOV



Ad
Council

conference (now synonymous with the Sangita Kalanidhi) when he was only 39. Besides this, Musiri was also the first principal of the Central College of Karnatak Music, which is today the Isai Kalluri at Brodie's Castle. The write up mentions Musiri acting in the film "Tukaram." The exertions he went through in its making resulted in life-long lung trouble for Musiri, which eventually forced him to opt for early retirement.

Reports on various condolence meetings on Musiri's passing appeared in issues of *The Hindu* on March 26 and 27.

On March 25, the then Governor of Tamil Nadu, K. K. Shah, condoled his death, while Semmangudi, then touring Bombay, issued a statement that Musiri's death was an "irreparable loss." He also led the mourners at a meeting organised by the Bharatiya Music and Arts Society and several other cultural organisations at Matunga on March 27.

Lalgudi Jayaraman and Alathur Srinivasa Iyer also spoke on the occasion. The Sangeet Natak Akademi mourned the death of Musiri, who was a "fellow" of that institution.

On March 30, S. Y. Krishnaswami, Musiri's close friend, penned an article in *The Hindu* titled, "The Musiri I Knew." Written in SYK's characteristic style, it throws some light on the prefix "Musiri," for, the singer did not hail from that village. His native place was Bommalalayam. When asked about it, Musiri apparently replied, " How can a Carnatic musician prefix such a village name?" With a twinkle in his eye, no doubt.

[Printer friendly page](#)

[Send this article to Friends by E-Mail](#)



[Friday Review](#) [Bangalore](#) [Chennai and Tamil Nadu](#) [Delhi](#) [Hyderabad](#)
[Thiruvananthapuram](#)

Features: [Magazine](#) | [Literary Review](#) | [Life](#) | [Metro Plus](#) | [Open Page](#) |
[Education Plus](#) | [Book Review](#) | [Business](#) | [SciTech](#) | [Friday Review](#) | [Young](#)
[World](#) | [Property Plus](#) | [Quest](#) | [Folio](#) |

The Hindu Group: [Home](#) | [About Us](#) | [Copyright](#) | [Archives](#) | [Contacts](#) | [Subscription](#)

Group Sites: [The Hindu](#) | [Business Line](#) | [Sportstar](#) | [Frontline](#) | [Publications](#) | [eBooks](#) | [Images](#) | [Home](#) |

Comments to : thehindu@vsnl.com **Copyright** © 2006, The Hindu

Republication or redissemination of the contents of this screen are expressly prohibited without the written consent of The Hindu
