

APARNA BALAJI

Aparna Balaji is a seasoned Carnatic music exponent and has more than four decades of learning, performing, composing, and teaching experience to her credit. She hails from a great Carnatic music lineage and has had the privilege of being under the tutelage of many highly renowned and much sought-after teachers and stalwarts of Carnatic music. Such distinguished artists include her grandfather, *Sangeetha Bhooshanam* (late) Sri. O.V. Subramanian, her father *Sangeetha Choodamani* (late) Sri. O.S. Thiagarajan, her uncle *Kalaimamani* Sri. O.S. Arun, and *Sangeetha Kalanidhi* Sri. Neyveli. R. Santhanagopalan.

Aparna's passion for the art brought her many opportunities locally (within India, and now in the US) and internationally. Aparna has performed in many of the top institutions for Carnatic music, spanning the length and breadth of India and the US. Aparna's versatility, well-rounded skills and passion for the arts are underscored by the vast body of collaborative ensemble productions she's been an integral part of, including those with highly esteemed artists from the Greater Boston area.

Aparna's dedication in enriching the world of music and arts can be witnessed from the varied projects she has conceptualized and accomplished. Such efforts add value not only to her audiences and students, but to the larger body of Carnatic music in today's world. Unique amongst these efforts is the Abhyaas Students Panel (2019 – present), which empowers budding young artists to collaborate, plan and execute art productions and presentations that explore different hues and aspects of the art form ultimately enriching the students and the community. Aparna is also the creator of Kala Yatra (2021 - present), a virtual series that walks through the artistic experience of musicians and dancers ranging from stalwarts of the earlier generation to stars and mainstays of the current art generation! This was conceived and executed during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic and speaks volumes of Aparna's commitment to always give back to the community against all odds!

Since relocating to the New England area (Greater Boston area in 2000), Aparna has been actively propagating the arts through the Abhyaas School of Music (Est. 2001). Her unwavering sincerity, passionate dedication and the sheer love for the art which took her to such artistic heights form the cornerstone of Abhyaas as well. This is witnessed through the strict classical rigor and skill exhibited by her students underscoring the great impact and strides in exemplary art propagation that Aparna and Abhyaas are continuing to make in the community. Aparna's dedication as a musician also makes her a loving and giving teacher. Former and current students of Abhyaas are constantly encouraged on their varied strengths, which naturally leads to an unwavering commitment from her students to the art form. Abhyaas is a testimony to the power of Carnatic music as a tool to unearth and spread rich traditions while serving as a foundation for larger musical exploration and empowers each student to utilize music as the key to their inward journey and betterment.