

## Ø Profile

**Guru Kaaraikkudi Mani** was born on September 11th 1945 at Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu. He is the son of Late Sri.T.Ramanatha Iyer and Smt. Pattammal. He stepped into Carnatic Music at the tender age of 3. Although he commenced with Vocal training, very soon he realized his special interest was in Percussion and switched over to Mridangam.



His Gurus were Karaikudi Sri Rangu Iyengar, Sri T R Hari hara Sharma and Sri K M Vaidyanathan .His first stage performance took place when he was 8 years old at Karaikudi. Thereafter his dedication and hard work to excel in the chosen field resulted in the Karakudi Mani

Bhani (Style) , which won the hearts of many young percussionists and others all over the World.

He was well known as "Master Mani" down south wherein he has shared stage and performed with many local artists and won many rewards and gold medals.

## Ø Accolades

**Master Mani received his first national award from the then President of India, Dr Radhakrishnan at the age of 18.**

For the next 4 decades, he did not accept any of the awards and titles that were offered to him, until **1999 when he accepted the national award from Sangeeth Natak Academy** . This was presented by the President of India at the time, Mr K.R. Narayan.

## Ø Sruthi Laya – The School

In 1989 , **Sruthi Laya Kendra** was started in a small room in Rangarajapuram, Chennai with 5 minutes thani avarthanam by Guru Sri Surajananda's Mridanga Naadam. With Guruji's blessings now the school has its centres at Chennai, Australia, USA. More than 1000 students learn Mridangam through this school directly or indirectly.

**On the 12 th June 2003, Mani received a luxury car presented by his few select students to mark his golden jubilee (50 years of involvement in Mridangam - Fifty Fest) as a percussionist.** Yet another landmark moment as Mani became possibly the first musician to receive such an honour from his students.

Guru Kaaraikkudi mani has launched a gurukulam called "**Seasun Gurukulam**" off East Coast road near the seashore at Panayur Chennai.

The gurukulam consist of classroom, common kitchen and music library for learners. Several short trips are made during the year in connection with courses.

The motto behind the gurukalam is **Study** and **Shine**

**Study** - Learners will be given rigorous practice and strenuous exercise during the tenure at gurukulam. It helps the learners to excel in their art.

**Shine** - Apart from Hard work, Smart work makes a person prolific in his career. Gurukulam not only makes learners work harder, but also makes work smarter which makes them shine in future.

Mani's mission on teaching doesnt stop with gurukulam. He is teaching the intricacies of laya for the students University of Madras. He has be appointed as a Professor Emeritus in Madras University.

He was also invited to teach in the resident programme at Grifith University of Brisbane and Victoria College of Arts in Melbourne. He has presented many Lec-Dem programmes all over the world.

## Ø **Ensembl e**

Mani's inherent desire to propagate the highly sophisticated structure of South Indian Rhythm and present innovative rhythmic ideologies led him to set up the **Sruthi Laya percussion ensemble**. This was supported by a large orchestra. He gave importance to taalavadya concerts and released CDs namely Sruthi Laya Vol 1 and 2, Laya Chitra, Laya Priya, Pushkaram, Melodessey etc.

With these unique ensembles, the talavadya instruments and thani avartanam concerts gained respect and elevated Mridangam to a different league. **This awareness gave a thrust to many contemporary artists to bring out audio and CD albums.**

**Guru Kaaraikkudi Mani was the pioneer in bringing Mridangam to the centre stage.** He also gave a new dimension when he combined Mridangam with other traditional instruments such as Thavil,Chendai, Tabla and Pakhwaj.

He has also extended the rhythmic repertoire in the classical dance field. Along

with renowned **Bharathanatyam dancer Smt Rajeshwari Sainath**, who is Guru Kaaraikkudi Mani's niece and student. He has introduced new concepts (rare varnams, innovative jathi's rare thalams) in the dance field. Performed by Smt Rajeshwari Sainath, He has produced dance programmes that combine melody, rhythm and dance like never before.

His approach to fusion is methodical and produced after much research, planning together with innovative ingenuity. He believes that fusion is not just the coming together of musical instruments but the fusing of musical systems done by musicians who have sufficient expertise to produce music that is inseparable. A notable aspect of Mani's fusion is the technical perfection that is maintained with the fusion adhering to the rules of classical music at all times.

Guru Kaaraikkudi Mani has performed with many international artists like **Paul Grabowsky of Australian Art Orchestra, Eero Haemmeneimi of Finland Naada group, Elio Marchesini La Scala percussionist and Livio Magnini of Italy, Paul Simon of USA and with Finland Philharmonic Orchestra**. A piece called Layapriya was performed with Finland Philharmonic Orchestra which was later performed by the **Battery Dance Company as a dance ballet**. Apart from that, he has also collaborated with **Japanese musician JOHN KAIZAN NEPTUNE** to create an album named "Steps in Time". In this album, Guru Kaaraikkudi Mani has created a unique synthesis of shakuhachi and Indian percussion.

The Australian Art Orchestra has adapted his Bahudari and Ranjani compositions into Jazz style and released it as "**Into The Fire**". The Naada group of Finland has converted the Behag composition into Jazz orchestration and released it as "**UNMATCHED**". It is his greatness as a percussion maestro that made Eero Haemmeneimi dedicate 4 compositions in Mani's name.

His latest venture titled, "**Amrutham - Fusion for Freedom**" is an imaginative, novel effort that has captured many fans.

## Ø **Winter Music Festival**

Sruthi Laya kendra Chennai run by Guru Kaaraikkudi mani, conducting winter music festival dedicated to **Guru Surajanandha** since 1988 . **The Guru Surajananda and Gowri Manohari awards** with a cash award are given to eminent personalities and best performers during the festival season.

During Winter Music festival each day's Nominal entry fee is donated to a senior Musician during the season.

## Ø **Mission**

Mani is still on the mission with multiplied determination and enthusiasm, of propagating the value of Rhythm in music and the role of Mridangam and the importance of rhythm in music to reach the masses worldwide and catapulting mridangam with multiplied determination and enthusiasm to more heights.

Guru Kaaraikkudi Mani, a veteran of fifty five years in the field of Carnatic music is not just a great performer, but a dedicated teacher too. With a zest and passion rarely found elsewhere, he has created a veritable generation of musicians and artists to sustain his style into the next millennium.

A composer of considerable acclaim, he has wowed audiences the world over with the Carnatic and jazz ensembles. To truly take Carnatic Music to masses, he has been single-handedly editing and publishing a bimonthly magazine called Layamani Layam for the past 13 years. His unique organizing skill (as exemplified by the many percussion schools he runs world-wide and the annual music festival he conducts at Chennai, India) makes for a really multi-faceted personality.

Quite interestingly though, It's not the above qualities that set him apart. His humility, down-to-earth attitude, dedication, discipline and honesty are what set him apart as a shining sun.

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