

K S Kalidas

Born on December 30, 1937 at Thoothukudi, to Senthil Appan and Thangammal, Kalidas came under the tutelage of the maestro Palani M. Subramania Pillai and emerged as a torchbearer of the Pudukottai school of percussion. Though he was employed at the Indian Railways from where he retired as Chief Engineer in 1992, he kept his association with music alive by accompanying numerous senior artistes in their performances. Rated in the A Grade by the All India Radio, he performed regularly for it for 28 years.

Kalidas has emerged as a tireless propagator of the Palani style of mridangam. He has conducted numerous lecture demonstrations and spoken at length on the subject. Most importantly, he has trained several students who are performing artistes today. He has also been a serious writer on classical music – reviews, articles and detailed analysis of artiste styles have emerged from his pen. He has been at the forefront in identifying young talent and writing about them. Kalidas is also known to be an objective judge and, in that capacity, has been invited by numerous organisations to evaluate performances. It is however as a student of Vidwan Palani Subramania Pillai that he would like to be known.

The Music Academy, Madras confers on him the title of Sangita Kala Acharya.

Palkulangara K Ambika Devi

Born on December 3, 1939 at Thiruvananthapuram to K.N. Kesava Pillai and C.K. Karthyayini Amma, Ambika Devi took to music when young. She later enrolled at the Sree Swathi Thirunal Government Music College where she came under the tutelage of stalwarts such as Sangita Kalanidhi Semmangudi R. Srinivasa Iyer, C.S. Krishna Iyer, Sangita Kala Acharya Parassala B. Ponnammal and Nellai T.V. Krishnamurthy. Her husband, Prof. Chennithala Krishnakutty Nair, who was professor of mridangam at the same institution was also a major support in her pursuit of music.

Having qualified with first rank in the Ganabhushanam and Vidwan courses from the Music College, Ambika Devi became teacher at the same institution and retired as Professor of Music after 32 years of service. She then served as a Reader at the Sree Sankaracharya University and as a visiting guest faculty at the Department of Music, Kerala University. In her teaching capacity, she has trained three generations of musicians. The senior-most woman musician in Kerala today, she is considered an authority in Malayalam compositions.

The Music Academy, Madras confers the title of Sangita Kala Acharya on her.