



*‘Sangeeta Kala Bharathi’
‘Sangeeta Sudhanidhi’ ‘Mridanga Maarthanda’
‘Naada Kalaa Poorna’ ‘Mridanga Ratna’ ‘Nadopasaka’
‘Mridanga Naada Nabhomani’
‘Mridanga Naada Kala Shiromani’
‘Layanilaya’ ‘Laya Praveena’
Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham Asthana Vidwan*

Dr. VANKAYALA VENKATA RAMANA MURTHY

Mridangam Artist – TOP Grade

Retd. Staff Artist, All India Radio, Visakhapatnam

Address: 50-54-10/4, Mig - 17, First Floor, North Extension Layout, Seethammadhara, Visakhapatnam -530013

Phone Number: 9618761616

Email ID - mridangamramana@gmail.com

Website: <https://mridangamramana.com/>

PHASE 1: Lineage, Legacy & Eminence

- ❖ Sri Vankayala Venkata Ramana Murthy, born on 8th August 1963, is a *4th-generation exponent* of the *Bhagavatha Sampradaya*, hailing from a family of pioneers of **Thoorpu Bhagavatham**, a revered musical tradition of Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ Trained by his illustrious father and Guru, **‘Mahamahopadhyaya’ Late Sri Vankayala Narasimham**, he began performing at a tender age of 8 and has sustained a remarkable **53-years journey in Mridangam performance**, mastering tradition and innovation alike.
- ❖ Sri Vankayala Venkata Ramana Murthy belongs to the famous **‘Mullapudi Baani’**.
- ❖ He introduced a **New Approach to Mridangam** accompaniment, integrating **Thoorpu Bhagavatham & Pakhawaz** techniques and enhancing rhythmic depth and texture.
- ❖ He won **Gold Medal - First Prize** in the AIR National Music Competitions in 1981, marking his rise as a national-level prodigy.
- ❖ In 2007, he was awarded **‘Top Grade’** in Mridangam by All India Radio.
- ❖ He served as a **‘Top Grade – Grade I’ Staff Artist** at AIR Visakhapatnam for **34 years**
- ❖ In 2023, he was honoured with an **Honorary Doctorate in Mridangam** from United Theological University for his contribution in the field of Indian classical percussion.
- ❖ Serving as a jury member on the panel of **Regional & Central Music Audition Board of All India Radio**, Prasar Bharathi
- ❖ As a guru, he teaches through the traditional **Gurukula System** imparting values along with rigorous training. He has many students to his credit, who are graded artists of All India Radio working as lecturers

in government colleges, performing artists in India and Abroad. Guided many research scholars.
Adjudicated for many theses (for the award of Doctorate Degrees)

PHASE 2: Global Achievements, Innovation & Landmark Performances

- ❖ He is the first Mridangam artist from Visakhapatnam to reach such global prominence, having performed in over **35 countries** and on the world's most prestigious stages:
 - United Nations, Geneva (1997)
 - UNO, Washington (2011) in the presence of UN Secretary-General Ban-Ki-Moon
 - Royal Albert Hall, London
 - Lincoln Centre, New York
 - Theatre De La Ville, France (2014)
 - Darbar International Music Festival, UK
 - Swan Festival, Perth, Australia
 - Sydney Opera House- First-ever Mridangam artist to perform accompanying Dr. Bombay Jayashree.
 - Kennedy Centre, USA with Padma Vibhushan Dr. L. Subramaniam
 - Durban, South Africa – invited by ICCR, Govt. of India for India's 60th Independence Anniversary
 - Adelaide Music Festival – Australia and New Zealand
 - Performed in famous Opera Theatres in China, Russia, Muscat with the respective symphony orchestras.
- ❖ He has performed in the presence of two Presidents of India – **Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam** and **Smt. Pratibha Patil**, as well as several Governors and Chief Ministers of different Indian states.
- ❖ He led a mass percussion ensemble at the first-ever Visakha Utsav, a heritage to the cultural landscape.
- ❖ He has accompanied a constellation of musical legends, including:
 - **Carnatic Vocalists:** Dr. M. Balamurali Krishna, Nedunuri Krishnamurthy, Voleti Venkateswarlu, T. K. Govinda Rao, Dr. S. Ramanathan, T.N. Seshagopalan, Sanjay Subrahmaniam, P. Unnikrishnan, D.K. Pattammal, Parassala Ponnammal, Mani Krishna Swamy, Bombay Sisters, Dr. Veda Valli, M.S. Sheela, Srirangam Gopalaratnam, Nagamani Srinath, Dr. Bombay Jayashree, Hyderabad Brothers, etc.
 - **Veena Artists** Mysore Dorai Swamy Iyengar, Dr. Emani Sankara Sastry, Dr. Chitti Babu, R. K. Suryanarayana, Smt. Gayatri
 - **Flute Maestros:** Dr. N. Ramani, B. N. Suresh, S. Shashank,
 - **Violinists:** R.K. Venkatarama Sastry & Sethuraman, Dr. M.S. Gopalakrishnan, Dr. L. Subramaniam, Chalakkudi Narayana Swamy, Lalgudi GJR Krishnan & Vijaya Lakshmi, Nagaraj & Dr. Manjunath, Kumaresh & Ganesh
 - **Others:** Mandolin U. Srinivas, Chitra Veena Ravikiran etc.
 - **Hindustani Legends:** Pandit Jasraj, Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia, Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, Ustad Sultan Khan, Pandit Viswa Mohan Bhat, Pandit Anindo Chatterjee, Pandit Tanmoy Bose

- ❖ He has performed with World Symphony Orchestras and honours Fusion Albums to his credit such as **Bay of Bengal, Neelgiri Express, Expressiveness, Expressive India**
- ❖ He is the co-composer of Indo-Western orchestral works like Neelgiri Express and Bay of Bengal, created in collaboration with Austrian and German musicians, sponsored by the Cultural Ministry of Austria.
- ❖ He authored the first-of-its-kind book: “**Aesthetics in the Art of Mridangam – A Percussion Expression**”, a guidebook for upcoming artists.
- ❖ His percussion album **Layaalayam** presents Mridangam as a solo expressive medium.
- ❖ He has been interviewed by BBC, and featured extensively in local, national, and international media.
- ❖ Performed ‘**Moodu Tharala Mridangam**’ (Mridangam Artists of Three generations) in World Telugu Conference 2012 held in Tirupathi.
- ❖ Performed in many concerts in **National Program of Music** of All India Radio and Doordarshan which includes **Mridangam Solo** performances in 2015 and 2021 respectively.
- ❖ Performed in many **Aakashavani Sangeetha Sammelanam Concerts** which includes **Mridangam Solo** performance in 2016.

PHASE 3: Pedagogy, Research Guidance, Awards & Titles

- ❖ A passionate educator, he has trained numerous students who became accomplished artists, and guided many research scholars, strengthening the future of Indian classical percussion.
- ❖ He served 3 times as Subject Expert and **Board of Studies Member at Andhra University’s Department of Music & Dance.**
- ❖ He developed **Audio-Visual Learning** modules for students at Potti Sriramulu Telugu University.
- ❖ He delivered many invited Lec-Dems and workshops at premier universities across India and abroad.
- ❖ His conceptual compositions include **Pushkara Godavari, Aakash Ganga, Pushkarini**
- ❖ He designed new talas named **Shravana and Revathi**, contributing uniquely to rhythmology.
- ❖ His musical Feature “Swachcham – Sivam – Sundaram” received the **Prasar Bharathi National Award.**
- ❖ He was featured in many Akashvani Sangeet Sammelan and National Programmes of Music Concerts as a soloist as well as accompanist.
- ❖ He participated in 72 episodes of Raga Ravali on SVBC-TTD.
- ❖ He conducted over 50 Tala Vadya Kachcheris in India and abroad (percussion ensembles)
- ❖ He has served as Adjudicator for prestigious music competitions and reality shows, including **PAADUTHA TEEYAGA**, conducted by **S. P. Balasubrahmanyam**

Awards & Government Recognition

- ❖ Ugadi Puraskaram (2016) – Government of Andhra Pradesh
- ❖ Best Senior Mridanga Vidwan (2011) – The Music Academy, Madras
- ❖ Best Professional Award – Rotary International
- ❖ Felicitated at Amaravathi Global Music & Dance Festival – Govt. of Andhra Pradesh

Honorary Titles Conferred

- ❖ Asthana Vidwan – Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam
- ❖ Mridanga Naada Nabhoomani – Hamsadhwani Charitable Trust
- ❖ Sangeetha Kala Bharathi – Visakha Music & Dance Academy
- ❖ Naadha Kalaa Poorna – Sri Shankara Matham
- ❖ Sangeetha Sudha Nidhi – Vijaya Thyagaraja Sangeetha Sabha
- ❖ Mridanga Marthanda – Sri Thyagaraja Cultural Trust
- ❖ Mridanga Ratna – Sri Satya Sai Seva Trust
- ❖ Nadopasaka – M. Srirama Murthy Memorial Trust
- ❖ Laya Nilaya – Sri Shakthi Charities
- ❖ Dwaram Venkata Swamy Naidu Puraskaaram – Visakha Music Academy
- ❖ Mridanga Naada Kala Shiromani – Kachchapi Kalakshetram
- ❖ Laya Praveena – Sri Dandamudi Ramamohanrao Laya Vedika

In Conclusion

Sri Vankayala Venkata Ramana Murthy is not merely a Mridangam artist—he is a global cultural envoy, a revered Guru, an innovator, an academician, and a custodian of Andhra's rhythmic legacy. As the first Mridangam artist from Visakhapatnam to gain wide national and international acclaim, he paved the way for future artists through performance, teaching, research, innovation, and spiritual devotion to rhythm.

YouTube Links

<https://youtu.be/d9BegT0xX1U?si=6I5hB6n5XU3N5Ann> - Darbar International Music Fest, Nov 22, 2014, London, UK

https://youtu.be/NWMveW-v_9U?si=mtVpm94OqIjh-fBp - With Padmavibhushan Dr. Mangalampalli Balamurali Krishna

<https://youtu.be/Q0CwES9ZDAg?si=LIgCch9npLrEmwxN> - With Padmabhushan Dr. L. Subramaniam, Apr 22, 2019, Washington, D.C., USA

https://youtu.be/AzmEkmZMn1Q?si=U4MhkQgxHEG7G_Cd -Mridangam Solo Layavinyasam – National Programme of Music (Jul 6, 2022)

https://youtu.be/4c7YAz4Jido?si=kSHAW2L_jO5QEOom - Sydney Opera House, Apr 28, 2013