CHAPTER IV

RAVIVARMAN TAMPI AND HIS CONTEMPORARY MUSICIANS AND COMPOSERS

There were many eminent contemporaries of Tampi, who showed their efficiency in various fields. When one go through their life and contribution, will realise that no wonder that the period of Tampi and Svati is named as the golden period of Karnatik music in Travancore.

Here selected list of his contemporaries is given

Kathakali Composers

1. Ayiliyam Tirunal

Was born as the second son to Rugmini Bai Thampuratti and Paliakkara Koil Thampuran in the year 1832. He had a keen interest in music and literature even in his early childhood. He became a very good scholar in music as well as in literature. He was a veteran in English literature. Parurkada Appu Warrier was his guru in Sanskrit. He had obtained a very good knowledge in various subjects from the court scholar. Apart from Sanskrit and English, he was also an expert in languages such as Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Hindi, Marathi etc.

When Uthram Thirunal vacated the throne in 1847, Ayiliyam Tirunal used to assist his elder brother in the matter of administration.

He married Kalyani Kutty Thankachi the daughter of his uncle in 1851. After the death of his first wife he got again married with Mathrapalli Kalyani Kutty Amma in 1862.
Music concerts and debates were organized under the auspicious of the Maharaja. He was highly talented in music and he used to practice music very systematically. He and his contemporary musician Haripad Rabhava Warrier used to perform together in Shakumukham palace to develop their excellent skill in music. The great musicians of the time came to Travancore court and performed there.

The great musician like Parameswara Bhagavathar, Vainika Kalyana Krishan Bhagavathar and Fidil Mahadeva Bhagavathar adorned the court of Ayiliyam Tirunal. He had also written two gadya krithis ie, Meenaketana Charitam and Abhinjana Sakunthalam.

2. Aswathi Tirunal Ilaya Tampuran

He was born in the year ME. 931 as the son of Kilimanoor Ravivarma Koil Thampuran, the author of Kamsavadha and Pooyam Thirunal Thampuratti, the eldest among the four Princess who were adopted by His Highness Marthandavarama in the year 923 from Pallikkovilakom in Kolathunadu.

Dharamaraja and Ravivarma Koil Thapuran paid great attention in the education of Aswathi Tirunal. It is also considered that he also studied under the guidance of Reghunatha Theertha the Guru of Karthika Thirunal. He pays respect to his guru in the sloka “Sree matchankara narayana guru charana paicharana” in Srinagra Sudhakarabhana. He was an adept in music and other arts.

Aswathi Tirunal was also present along with Karthika Tirunal when he celebrated the Trippaidana in Sree Padmanabha Swami Temple. The following sloka in Balarama Bharatha proves his presence on the occasion.

```malayalam
തിരുമല മന്ത്രിപ്പെട്ടയിൽ തുരങ്കത്തിന്റെ കെട്ടി

മാളയാതിരിയിൽ നാരായണൻ ഗുരു ചാരാ പായെയൽ

മാളയാതിരിയിൽ മന്ത്രിപ്പെട്ടയിൽ
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He married a girl in 946 who came from Palkulangara Amma v vedu. This Thampuratti was adopted from Ulloor Uliyazhathura Ayirathala Veedu. In the year 957 Medam 28th his mother died. When Ravivarama Ilaya Thampuran, the younger brother of Karthikathirunal, passed away Aswathi Tirunal became the Yuva raja. In the year 1794 at the age of 38 he gave up his worldly life.

Aswathi Tirunal has a prominent place among the poets of Kerala. He has composed poems mostly in Sanskrit. But there are well known Malayalam poems composed by him. He has composed 3 thesis in Sanskrit such as Vanchisa Stavam, Karthaveeraya Vijayam, Santana Gopalam, 2 dramas such as Sringara Sudhakaram bhanam, Rukmini Parinayam, Dasavathara dandaka in Sanskrit. The most important among these is Rukmini Parinaya. He has composed about four Attakkadas, such as Narakasuravadha, Rukmini Svayamvaram, Poothanamoksham, and Ambarishacharitam and one Kirtana about Lord Sri Padmanabha.

He was a great scholar in Sanskrit. He took great pain in the usage of apt and appropriate words. According to Mahakavi Ulloor this great poet and composer has followed the footsteps of Melpathur Bhattathiri, Bhattathiri and Bhavabhudi. These 3 poets had influenced him a lot.

Some of his works are explained in brief below.

**Vanchisastvam**

This is otherwise called as Vanchi Maharajastavam. This is about his maternal uncle. It contains of 9 poems and one long prose. In the beginning of this he explains each sloka about the Kausthubha retna of Mahavishnu, Lakshmi narayana etc. and he ends it with the sloka beginning with the words ‘Ati leghu Bhaval Karanam’. When he composed this
sloka he was only 20 years of age. He had a great respect and feeling about Karthika Thirunal and Karthika Thirunal also had a great feeling about Aswathi Thirunal. Besides Vanchisthavam which is about Karthika Tirunal, we can see his reference in his two works such as Rukmini Parinayam and Srinkara sudhakaram.

Aswathi Tirunal has composed many champus. But Karthaveerya v1Jayam stands as the first and foremost, 

Is the beginning sloka of this champu. The story of this champu starts from the ruling of Karthaverarjuna in Mahishmathi, to the request of the saint Pulastya to release Ravana from his custody.

His other champu Santhana Gopalam has attained more popularity in Kerala. One Sloka from this chapu is given below. The appearance of the Brahmana!

His Sringara sudhakaram Bhana stands next to the Bhanas of Mazhamangala.

He wrote the drama Rugminiparinaya in the year 962 after he has became the Yuvaraja. This drama has five scenes. This drama is one of the monumental proofs of his genius. He has given and excellent improvisation in the description of the characters Rugmini, Vasubhadra.
and his friend Brahmana. Dasaavathara Dandaka is based on the ten avatharas of Mahavishnu.

Coming to his Attakadha, his first Attakadha is the Uttara part of Narasapuravada. Then he composed Poothanamoksha. It is commonly seen that the performers of Kadhakali perform Rugmini Svayamvara as their first stage performance. Karthika Tirunal was more fond of the stories from Mahabharatha. But Aswathi Tirunal was more fond of the stories from Bhagavatha. It seems to be that Rugmini Svayamvaropakhyam has attracted him very much and may be for his reason he wrote one drama in Sanskrit and one Attakadha in Malayalam on the same story. He is considered in many respects as the most prolific composer of Travancore prior to Svati Tirunal.

3. Karthika Tirunal

He was born in the year 1724 to Karthika Tirunal Parvathi Bai and Kilimanooor Kerala Varma Koi Tampuran. He became the Ilayaraja when his maternal Uncle Marthanda Varma enthroned as the Maharaja of Travancore in the year 1730. He obtained his primary education and Ayudhavidya with an extraordinary skill. He himself was a good Vocalist with a fine anrhih voice. Her Highness Sethu Parvathi Bai an accomplished musician and vainika used to encourage musicians with liberal patronage. Karthika Thirunal is reputed to be the first violinist among the royal household. In his court flourished UnnaiWarrio or eminent composer whose musical greatness was of a remarkable kind.

After the demise of Maharaja he was crowned as the Maharaja of Travancore in 1758. He proclaimed his proficiency in the good will of the people for about forty years. About his skill to favour the subjects, his broad-minded heart and his power to execute the legislative codes were really appreciated by the westerners. By these peculiarities even today he is known as ‘Dharmaraja’.
His songs are exceptionally ornate and dilatory having a slow movement. He was a musician of high order where originality and relativity were unquestioned and who was able to leave indelible marks of greatness behind him. He gained high proficiency in eight languages, such as Sanskrit, Persian, Hindi, Malayalam, Tamil, Portuguese, English, and Dutch.

He translated Gitagovinda, into Malayalam named Bhasastapadi retaining the original ragas, talas and at the same time introducing many ideas and innovations.

Kartika Tirunal has also contributed to the stock of Karnataka music numerous compositions, which were set particularly for Kadhakali, and have set a musical standard by their simple former of melody with little alliterations and a natural flow of thought. His songs numbering 150 set to different ragas and talas are sung by musicians in the Padmanabha Swamy Temple at Thiruvananthapuram even today.

He has also written a treatise known as Balaramabharatham which deals with the science of natya in relation to music. He accepts raga, tala and musical accompaniment as the means for expression and emotions. From the use of the ragas it can be understood that the work was composed when the author was seated in the middle of an assembly of musicians. The Balaramabharatam offers with an invocation to Lord Nataraja, Goddess Parvathy, who is in a dancing posture and to Sri Padmanabha who appeared as a dancing child. The title ‘Balarama Bharata’ means Bharata Sartra written by Balarama. He wrote such a treatise on Natya at the request of some scholars of his court. Though he has referred many books on Musicology such as Sangita retnakara, Sabdaturvali, etc., in Balaramabharata he has given his own views and ideas about Natya. For this his deep knowledge in Kerala Natyakala has helped a lot. It is said that he was the first, to introduce Mohiniyattam in Kerala. The ‘Dasiyattam’ from the neighboring country persuaded him to make
Mohiniyattam in typical Kerala style. He did this by one of his artist named Karuthedathu Chomathiri. Many artists had received valuable presents from the Maharaja.

A sloka, which brings out his scholarship, is given below.

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It was during his time that the Kadavakali art began to grow and flourish. The golden period of Kadavakali begins from this period. He has organised a Kadavakali unit in the palace and he made them to perform his Attakkadhas, during occasions like temple festivals and Navarathri days. He modified the make-up and costumes. Mathur Panikar was the leading artist of the unit.

Most of his Attakkadhas are based on the stories from Mahabharatha. Only Narakasuravadha is based on the story from Bhagavatha. He has written only the purva part of the story. The Uttara part is written by Aswathi Tirunal. There is a legend behind this. Thar is in the pada.

Karthika Tirunal had written only this much. No idea struck him, and so he left it there thinking that it can be completed afterwards. Aswathi Tirunal saw this and he completed the charana with line ‘तीर्थाविके जयकमलादेवल।’ Karthika Tirunal was very much pleased, he asked his nephew to complete the whole Attakkadha. His other Attakkadhas
are Subhadraharanam, Bakavadhom, and Kalyana Sowgandhikam. In his Attakadhas the style of Kottayam Thampuran can be seen, especially in Bakavadha and Kalyana Sowgandhika.

He has accepted a style of presenting in a simple language. Lots of Malayalam slokas can be seen in his Attakadas.

Many scholars and musicians adorned his court such as Kunchan Nambiar, Unnai Warrier, Ittirarissa menon, Sada Siva Deekshitar Pautalam Subramanya Sartrî; Idivettukkadu Nambootiri, Neelakanta Deekshitar etc.

The great scholar poet and composer died in the year 1797 in the day of Sivarathri at the age of 73.

4. Unnai Warrier

He was born at Akathoot Warriyam near Koodal Manickam Temple at Irijalakkuda between the year 1735 and 1750. There are so many versions told about his period of life. History says that Nalcharitham Attakkadha was performed along with Khana vadha and Balivadha in the year 920 November during temple festivals at Padmanabha Swami Temple. It was performed by the artists who came from Aranmula and Thiruvananthapuram. If it is true warrier should have written the Attakkadha in the beginning of 10th C. Records says that Unnai was the guru of Ramapurathu warrier, the author of Kuchela vritham vanchipattu. The birth of Ramapurathu warrier was in the year 878 ME. So we have to come to the conclusion that Unnai was born in the year 850 ME . It was considered that he learnt Sanskrit under Thazhekkattu Sankarappoduval. During that period he was staying in Karimbattamatam at Trichur. But we cannot firmly say that it is correct, because if it is correct he must have born in Padinjareppattu Warriam at Trichur. Any way he attained proficiency under the guidance of eminent teachers in learning the various subjects like Vyakaranam, Vedantam, Vaidyam, Kavyalangaram, Sastra and Music. He attained
proficiency in literature and music during his childhood. He wrote some slokas in Malayalam early in his life. One of them is given below:

अपाणेण वायुस्य वायु संविधितकालकालेण संविधितकालेण

समाधिकार दधिकार ज्ञाममाकर विगतामम विगतामम

समाधिकारणं कुलस्वतिकारणं कुलस्वति कुलस्वति

समाधिकारणं कुलस्वतिकारणं कुलस्वति कुलस्वति

His first work might be Ramapanchasathi. Then he wrote Girija Kalayana Gita Prabandam at the order of Changaran Kartha. Then he wrote his most monumental work Nalacharitam during his stay at Kochi Palace. He was a devotee of both the deities Kudalmanikyam and Lord Vadakkunnadha. He has composed some slokas about Vadakkunnadha.

His first work Ramapanchasathi is a Garland of 500 slokas in Sanskrit about Srirama of Irijalakkuda Temple. In this he has imitated ‘Narayaniya’ of Melpathur.

Girija Kalyana Gita-prabandha was written during his stay at Trichur and at that time he was doing his Sivabhajanam at Vadakkunadha Temple. It contains 3 parts such as Thapovritha part, Uduaha Part and Sambhava part which is based on Sivapurana and Kuma-Sambhava of Kalidasa. There no other Gita Prabanda which has a comparison with Girija Kalyana.

His most important and popular work is Nalacharitam Attakkadha. He has divided the story into 4, that is to be played in 4 days. The navarasas are well depicted in this Attakkadhas, that it stands as the first among the Attakkadhas. No other composer except Irayimman Tampi has composed beautiful Kadhakali Padas like him. अंगरक्षितोपायम्

मूलानिकारणम् नवाद्विवेकवाचनम्, नवाद्विवेकवाचनम्

are some of the beautiful in Nalcharita. Some of the padas are used by Kerala women in
Thiruvathira. He composed one more Attakkadha that is Subhadraharanam. It is believed that he passed away at the age of 61 in the year 1812.

5. Uthram Tirunal (990 – 1036 ME)

He was born in the 19th C. He has gained a good training under the guidance of the guru of his elder brother Svati Tirunal. He was an adept in handling the languages such as Sanskrit: Hindi, Marati, English, Tamil and Malayalam. He also attained a very good knowledge in English like his brother and also was a Scholar in the field of Physics and Chemistry. He gave more importance to retain Govt. English Medium schools in Thiruvananthapuram. He was enthroned in the year 1847.

He was one of the foremost Kadakali composers. He patronised the artists and arts. He expressed his great interest in this matter even in his child hood. He had secured the awards from Parvathi Bai for his performance. After the demise of Rama Varma, the art of Kadakali lost its popularity for a while, but during the reign of Uthram Tirunal, Kadakali attained a high position due to his enormous encouragements.

He formed a yoga by famous Kadakali actors from different part of the state. First of all people used to call the Yoga as ‘Poojappura Kottaram vaka Kadakali Yoga’. After the enthronement of Uthram Tirunal they call it as Valia Kottaram vaka Kadakali Yoga.

Eswara Pillai was the super most actor in the court. Maharaja had a good opinion about Eswara Pillai and so he had been appointed as ‘Palliyyara vicharippu’. In 1853 a school of Kadakali was opened named ‘Kerala vilasam’ in Thiruvananthapuram, by conductors according to the advice of Maharaja. The conductors published a renowned grandha or books called ‘Attakadhas of 24 days’. It made a great help to the Malayalam literature.

He encouraged his favorite poets to write Attakadhas. The following lines from Dakshayagam of Tampi,
denote that this Attakada was composed by the order of Uttram Tirunal, Maharaja, also composed an Attakadha known as Simhadvaja Charitham. Compared to Tampi’s, Attakadhas of Maharaja occupies only a second place.

OTHER LUMINARIES

1. Aligiri Naidu

He was great painter in the court of Svati Tirunal. He painted a beautiful picture of Uttram Tirunal and it is attached here with.

2. Ambadi Kunjukrishnappuduval. (987-1056 ME)

He was born in the year 987 (Makaram) in a famous family known as Ambadi at Trichur. Traditionally they had the ‘Kazhaka’ in the Vadakkunnatha Temple.

He learnt Sanskrit from Tazhakkadu Cheriya Narayana Poduval. He gained deep knowledge in Sanskrit from his guru. He pays his homage to his guru in his Vyasotpati Tullal.

He came to Thiruvananthapuram some time before the death of Svati Tirunal. Svati Tirunal welcomed him with great pleasure because he had heard of Puduval as well as his family. He was there at Thiruvananthapuram till 1034, that is the time of Ayilyam Tirunal.
A picture of His Highness Uthram Thirunal Maharaja painted by Alagiri Naidu.
He was an adept in composing Slokas. Once Svati Tirunal presented him a Virasringala for filling up a Samasya. In 1022 during the time of he Uttram Tirunal, he composed a Tullal, named Pattabhishekam and sang it before Utram Tirunal. It was about Svati Tirunal and it is said that when the part of the Swargarohana of Svati Tirunal was described, Utram Tirunal burst out. But this Kriti is yet to be located.

He has composed the Tullal Kathas named Vyasotpathi, Maravahanam, Attakadas named, Krishnavataram, Kesivadham, Kaliyamardanam by the order of Utram Tirunal, Kamsavadham and Kaikottikkalipattu named Patracharitam. He has composed many simple slokams on different occasions. He has also composed a song in the model of Tampi's 'Prananathan enikku nalkiya' at the request of a lady.

In 1054 he came to his own house at Trichur and in 1056 (Makaram) he passed away.

3. Haripad Rama Warrier (993-1030 ME)

He was born as the son of Machippurathu Potti, the mel santhi of Haripad temple and the sister of Haripad Kochu Pillai Warrier. In the child hood itself he attained deep knowledge in Sanskrit. He taught Sanskrit to the wife and children of Svati Tirunal. Svati Tirunal encouraged him.

He composed Indumati Swayamvaram Attakadha only. He has composed many poems on different occasions in the palace.

3. Haripad Kochugovinda Warrier (985 - 1030 ME)

He was also a member of Kaizhakke Warriam. He was the son of the younger brother of Kochupilllawarrier. His father’s name was also Sankaran like Kochupilla Warrier. His guru was KochupillaWarrier. When Kochupilla warrier was appointed as the Rajaguru, Kochugovinda Warrier also came with his to Trivandrum and stayed with him. In 1014, when
Kochupilla Warrierr died, he became the Rajaguru. He wrote Slokas about the death of Paravati Rani in 1028 and the Hiranyagarbha of Uthram Tirunal in 1029.

His works are Govinda Brahmandaniyam in Sanskrit and Bhi.shma Vijayam attakadha,Sakuntalam, Valliparinayam, Devasenasvayamvaram Kaikottikkalipattus and Krishnalamritam Talolam pattu in Malayalam.

He married a nair girl and they had a son named Ramankutty Bhagavtar who became popular among the dramatists of Kerala.

5.Haripad Kochupilla Warrier (960 - 1014 ME)

He was the guru of Svati Tirunal is Sanskrit. He was a member of Kizhkkedathu Warriam in Haripadu . Though he was known as Kochupilla Warrier, his actual name is Sankaran. He was selected as the guru of Svati Tirunal by Irayimman Tampi. It was in the year 998 and from that time permanantely he settled at Trivandrum. In the year 1011 Svati Tirunal visited Kizahakkedathu Warriam and he presented ‘Onappudava’ to each and every member of the family.

He has composed ‘Urvasi Svayam Varam Kathakali accorrding to the order of Uthram Tirunal. He has translated the ‘Saropadesa Kathakal’ of Esope into Malayalam. But it is to yet to be located . He has composed a Champu in Sanskrit in praise of Svati Tirunal named Ramavarma vijayam champu. He died in the year 1014.

6.Ittirarissa Menon:-

He adorned the court of Karthika Thirunal. He was born in a house at Ambalappuzha named Kavalapakuthiyil Akkakkodunnappunnamuriyil. He lived between the years 920 to 980 ME. His family was shifted from Thiruvanchikkulam, which his original family house, to Kavalam before his birth for some unknown reasons. In ancient records about him his name is written as Raman Ittirarichen. Raman was the name of his uncle.
He came from a very poor family. He learnt Sanskrit from teachers of his native place.

Considerably in the year 940 he went to the palace and met the Maharaja. He submitted a sloka which ends in the words “Daridryam janatapakramidam kenapi bhagtanahi”

Besides this sloka he submitted 2 Attakkadhas named Sanatana Gopalam and Rugmangada Charitam. The Maharaja was so pleased when he saw his works, that he donated a chain and a paddy field which was free from tax.

Besides Santana Gopalam and Rugmangada Charitan P. Govinda Pillai has stated that he has composed one more Attakkada named Banayuddha. Santana Gopala is more popular than the others. In his Attakkada Sanskrit slokas are rarely met with. There is not even a tinge of Sringara rasa in his Attakada except in Rugmangada Charitha where there is a sloka performed by Rugmangada and his wife.

He was an ardent devotee of the Lord Vishnu. There are fantastic padas such as ‘Vidimatan nirasikkamo’, ‘Jeevita nayaka vante’, which adds beauty to Santana Gopalam.

7. Kodungallur Vidwan Ilaya Thampuran (976 - 1026 ME)

He is another important contemporary of Tampi. Besides a great poet he was an adept in Vyakarana, Tarka, Astrology, Medicine, Music, Sculpture and Drama. In this he learnt only Vyakarana under a guru. The rest he achieved proficiency through his hard work, geniune talent and above all the blessings of ‘Bhadrakali’ the family diety. He had a number of disciples. He laid the foundation for the famous ‘Bhashashtapat’ named ‘Venmani prastana’.

His original name was Godavarma. He was born in the year 976 as the son of Kunjukutty Tampuraty of Kodungallor palace and Vellagallur Ilakurissi
Mathrudattan Namboothiri. His guru in Sanskrit was Valappilasari. He felt a fascination towards Sanskrit and asked his mother about how he could attain proficiency in the language. His mother advised to serve his family deity. This he began to serve his family deity Bhadrakali and became one of the greatest scholars in Kerala.

His prominent disciples in Vyakarana are- Kumbhakonam Krishna Sastri, Vaikam Pachumussath, Koikkal Matathil Kochunni Tirumulpad and in Astrology Kodungullor Ramavarma Raja, Nanu Jyolsyan, Karuthedathu Nambootiri etc.

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His works are the following Balyulbhavam or Mahendra Vijayan, Mahakavyam, Srirama Charitam Mahakavyam, Rasasadanam Bhanam, Tripura dahanam, Dasavatadasakam, Devadevaswarashatakam, Muraripustotram, Sripada saptakam, Sadasiv Sudhanandalahari etc. These are all in Sanskrit. He has composed a Kaikottikali in Malayalam named as Ahalyamoksham, besides many Muktakas in Sanskrit and Malayalam.

8. Kunchan Nambiar

The reigns of Martanda Varma and Ramavarma Maharajas witnessed remarkable infl uences of poetry. The patronage, which they extended to poets, bore rich fruits. The outstanding names among them are of those Unnai warrier and Kunchan Nambiar. Nambiar was a prolific writer who tried his hands in various forms of composition in all of which he achieved signal success. His learning was vast and his powers of observation of men and things are so keen and so varied that he was able to adopt the concept of great poets of antiquity to the conditions of Malabar Society.

He was a poet of uncommon genius, is the founder of that species of composition known as Tullalpattu. He tried all species of poetic composition prevalent at that time, Killipattu, Manipravala, Kavya, Thiruvatirappattu, Kirtanam and Vanchi pattu. His
works in each of these types are uncommendable and are widely read by all sections of the people.

He was born in Kalakkathu house in Killikurichi mangalam in Malabar. The date of his birth and death are not exactly known, though it is surmised that he was a contemporary of Karthika Tirunal at whose court he lived for a short period. In palace records it is seen that Nambiar had received many presents and other gifts such as tax free lands etc; during years 919,922,929,933 and 934 ME.

The exact date of his birth is unknown but there legend about his birth. That is, once a Namboothiri from Vanneri came to Trivandrum to meet Maharaja to request for help for the marriage of his daughter. After seeing the Maharaja he returned to his native place. On the way he came to Killikkuruchi temple and had his bath in the temple pond, keeping his purse on the bank. At this time a cow came there and put its cow dung over the purse and so he could not find his purse. He was so upset. At that time a pregnant lady came there to clean the steps of the pond and she saw this purse when she cleaned there. She gave the purse to him and the Namboothiri was so pleased that he blessed the lady that she would have a worthy son. That lady was the mother of Kunchan Nambiar. He is popularly known as Kalakkathu Kunchan Nambiar.

He has written poems even in boyhood. His first Tullal is said to have originated in the following way. While at Ambalapuzha in his younger days, he followed his original profession of beating the drum to the accompaniment of the Chakkiars kuthu or narration. One day he was reproved by the Chakiar in the course the Kuthu for omitting one beat in the drum through carelessness. Nambiar was very much offended at this insult and made a fresh step in the literary field by writing a Tullakadha, an action song, that very night.
The next day he was able to draw away the whole audience to witness his performance and thereby caused the poor Chakyar to be alone. He was very poor and sold several of his works for slight remunerations.

When Ambalappuzha was conquered he got himself introduced to the then King Karthika Tirunal of Travancore, who was very kind to him throughout his stay at Trivandrum. He was very witty in his conversations and a vein of humour can be seen running through all his works.

His works are varied mostly Tullalpattus. ‘Pathinalu vrittam’, Silavathy, Rugminisvayam varam pattu vrittam, Raghaviyam Mahakavya, Nalacharitham Kilipattu, Panchathantram Kilipattu, Sri Krishna vilasa vyakhya, Uttara Ramayanam Kilipattu are his works besides Tullalpattus. His works will continue to exercise influence on the minds of men as long as Malayalam language exists.

9. Meruswami

The most exalted musical personality in Svathi Tirunal’s court was Meruswami. He has cultivated music as a form of yoga, and was well versed in Hindustani and Karnatak music in theory and practice. Harikadha Kalakshepam is a branch of performing art, which combines music, dance and drama under religious pervert. The art is as old as vedas. Beginning in a humble way it branches into various forms under one style and title. The style, which we see today is said to be originated from Maharashtra. It travelled to Tanjure during the reign of Sarofjoe Maharaja. The most prominent master of this art was Meruswami Bhagavat. It was Maharaja Svati Tirunal who brought Meruswami from Maharashtra to Kerala. In the year 1011 ME he was appointed as one of the Astana vidvan in the salary of Rs. 110.

Meruswami was otherwise known as Ananda Padmanabha Goswami as well. His high pitched voice and capacity to effortlessly in the 3 registers of the gamut,
earned him the name of Kokilakanta. The Maharaja became his disciple and learnt from his the secrets of Nadopasana. A spacious house was presented to him near the western entrance to Padmanabhaswami temple which bears to this day by the name ‘Meruswami matom’. Although due to the lack of significant public interest in getting such buildings with historical associations, declared and maintained as public monuments, it has passed into private ownership. A special palanquin was also made for his use. The Maharaja used to make his visits, to his house, an extremely rare gesture in those days. In a letter written by Tulajarasana Rao, son of Subha Rao to a relation of his at Pudukkotta in September 1836, it is stated, “Now there is no lack of music and dance at Trivandrum and we are continually regaled almost of safety by the vocal harmony of Meruswami who is now completely become a Travancorean like us”. The composition of the two musical narratives of Svati Tirunal, Kuchelopakhyana and Ajamiliopakhyana comprising verses and songs in Maharastra musical types like saki, ovi, dindi and abhang was inspired by Meruswami.

An important matter which deserved to the particularly noted with regard to Meruswami is that, not only was he a guru of Svati Tirunal but also he came to be considered as a ‘Kulaguru’ of the Travancore royal family, for all time and a portrait of his in Valiakottaram palace at Trivandrum continues to this day as an object of worship by the Maharajas. He became intimately and permanently associated with the Travancore royal house as a spiritual perceptor.

10. Pattatu Kunjunni Nambiar (980 – 1050 ME)

He was born approximately in the year 980 in Irinjalakkuda in Kochin State. The name of his family house was Velutha Pattam or Vadakke Pattam of which, Pattam was the short form. It was on the northern side of Kudalmanikya Temple. Narayan Nambiar, the father of Kunjunni Nambiar, was a dependant of Dharmaraja. He
stayed at Thiruvananthapuram till 984. Kunjunni was his pet name and his actual name was Jayantan. Like Kunjukrishana Puduval, Kunjunni Nambiar was also one among the adepts who adorned the court of Svati Tirunal and Utram Tirunal.

He submitted a sloka to Svati Tirunal starting with the line according to the order of Utram Tirunal he composed a Sanskrit bhana named Rasaretnakaram. He also composed Bhagavadutu Ottamtullal, Panchasandhatullal, Ashtapatadi Kaikottikkali Pattu etc.

He died in the year 1050 in the star Visakham.

11. Princess Ayilayam Tirunal Rugmini Bai. (984 - 1012 ME)

She was the eldest sister of Svati Tirunal. She had a school of music and literature. Thampi has composed a Kriti about her, ‘Kulasekhara nripa sodari’. In this Kriti he describes her as the following.

She has composed a Kriti in Mukhari raga.

The Kriti starts as follows:
2. Sadasiva Deekshitar

He was a famous Sanskrit poet in the court of Karthika Tirunal. He wrote a book, describing the greatness of Maharaja, named 'Balarama varma Yasobhushanam'. In this he has stated about himself in the following sloka:

\[
\text{CiJ@CTU® 1 rue.i6@oco=-w1::)m dhJ eJ<R> m\text{n.J®1ru>112ldh<l>CTU .,}
\]

In this sloka he says that his father is Chokkanatha Dikshitar, mother is Meenakshiyamma and his gothra is Bharadvaja. There is no evidence to give about the ideas of his native place.

Besides 'Balaramvarma yasobhuanam' he has written a drama named 'Vasulakshmi kalyana'.

Balaramavarmayasobhushanam is a duplicate of Prataparudrayasobhushan. In this the hero is Balaramvarma. Like Prataparudrayasobhushnam in Balaramavarnayasobhushanam also he has given Prakarnas such as Payaka Prakarana, Kavya Nataka, Rasa Dosha, Guna, Sabdalankara, Arthlankara, Misralankara Prakaranas.

MUSICIANS AND COMPOSERS (TRINITY AND SVATI TIRUNAL)

1. Thyagaraja 1767-1847

The first of the musical trinity was third son of Ramabrahmam and Sitamma. His paternal grandfather Girirajakavi was an adept in singing devotional songs and maternal grand father was Vinakalahasthi Iyer who was a court musician in Tanjore. So his genious of music was natural.
From his childhood he was a staunch devotee of Sri Rama. He visited many temples and composed a number of Kritis. He has composed about 24000 Kritis. Besides this Kritis he has composed group Kritis such as Khanaragapancharetnam, Kovur Pancharatnam, Tiruvattiyur Pancharatnam, Lalgudipancharatnam etc. His services to Kamatic music are incomparable.

He led a very simple life. The famous saint composer Thyagaraja obtained Sanyasa in the year 1847 and attained mukti on the Pushya Bahula Panchami day in 1847.

2. Muthuswami Deekshitar

The second of the musical trinity was born to Ramaswamy Deekshitar. His grand father Govind Deekshitar and great grand father Venkateshwara Deekshitar were adepts in Karnatik music. They were attached to the court of the Nayak rulers, Achutappa Naik and Raghunatha Nayak of Tanjore.

Deekshitar has composed more than 3000 songs. These include group Krities like Navagraha Kritis, Kamalamba Navavarana, Abhayamba Navavarana, Sivanavarana, Panchalingastala kritis, Manipravala Kritis etc. The striking features in his kritis are that they are in very slow tempo and full of raga bhava.

He passed away in the year 1835.

3. Swati Tirunal Maharaja (1813-1847)

He is born as the ‘Garbha Sriman’ in the royal family of Travancore in the year 1830. Even from his childhood he has a good knowledge in Sanskrit, Malayalam, Telugu, Hindustani, Kannada, Mahratta, English etc.

He had a special liking for music and dance. Inspite of his heavy royal duties, he found time to compose Kritis, sing and play musical instruments. He invited many musicians even from other states and encouraged them.
He has composed Kritis in Sanskrit, Malayalam, Hindi, Telugu and Manipravalam. He has composed Kritis in many rare ragas like Saindavi, Lalitapanchamam etc. Other than Kritis, Svarajatis, Tanavaranas, Padavarnas and Padas, he also composed Ragamalikas, Tillanas, Khyals, Drupads and Bhajan. He has written operas like Kuchelopakhyanam, Ajamilopakhyanam and a group Kritis the famous Navaratri kirtanans, and Navandha Brahma kirtanans.

The great royal composer passed away in the year 1847 at the age of 32.

4. Syama Sastri (1763-1827)

He was born in the year 1763 as the son of Visvanatha Iyer. His real name was Syama Krishna. His family was chosen to perform puja to Bangaru Kamakshi temple of Tanjore. So naturally he became the great devotee of Kamakshi and has composed a number of Kritis on Kamakshi.

He has composed a number of Svarajatis, Tanavarnas and Kritis. Though he has composed more than 300 Kritis, only a few are in vogue today. Lack of printing facilities and lack of students may be the reasons for this. He has composed Kirtanans in Telugu, Sanskrit and a few in Tamil. He had a special liking for Ananda bairavi raga and chapu tala. He attained the feet of Kamakshi in his 64th year on the 16 the day after his wife’s demise.
Musicians and Composers

1. Alavvudin:

He was an adept in Hinstani music.

2. Govinda Marar (1798—1843)

A great name associated with Tampi’s times is Shatkala Govinda Marar. He hailed from Rama Manalam near Muvattupuzha. He was a brilliant singer of the 2nd half of 19th C. He belonged to the family of traditional temple drummers and had mastered the percussion instruments like Chenda, Idiakka, Timila etc., even while a boy. But being hit by rheumatism and crippled thereby he formed his dexterity to be of little avail in handling them and turned to vocal music and attained admirable skill after a course of six years under Haripad Ramswami Bhagavatar at Trivandrum. He had a highly responsive ravaijati sariram, which could produce with ease, clarity, and accuracy the musical expressions in very fast rhythmical combinations. He was almost a Sanyasin in his outlook and in spite of his physical disability he undertook a pilgrimage to the holy places all over India singing songs in praise of different Gods. During this period he devised a Tampura with seven strings instead of the usual four, adding two strings to Pa and one to Sa, there by giving the drone a more robust and pervading tone. He also acquired uncommon skill in singing pallavis to six degrees of speed by which he came to be called as Shatkala Govinda Marar. He collected and learnt a number of classical compositions current at the time, and also composed varnam, as with certain specialties which earned for them a group tilte viz—Govinda swami varnams. The exact nature of these varnams is less known and as such less popular. A specimen is the daru varnam in
the raga Mohanam, and whole musical set up and expression follow the age old sopian
traditions. It starts with ‘Dheem taka dheemtaka’.

Govinda Marar was a religious minded person. Later in his life he started
a pilgrimage to Benaras. He visited Trivandrum and he received a cordial welcome in
Svati Tirunal’s court. He had with his a remarkable collection of songs then current in
Tamil Nadu and this was placed before Maharaja. He later resumed his pilgrimage and
came to Tiruvayyar along with Kannayya Bhagavatari in the year 1842 to present the
compositions of Svati Tirunal before Thyagaraja and other great artists of the time and to
pay homage to the great composer Thyagaraja. It was probably an Ekadesi day or a day
with similar significance. The disciples of Thyagaraja were singing in his presence and
before a large audience that had collected there. After the Purvanga that is the first half
was over, it was a custom that the distinguished guests are invited in turn to sing that
the Uttarabhaga or the 2nd half, commencing with the Divyanama Sankiartanam was
begun when he was requested to sing, he tuned his 7 stringed Tampura, which already
attracted the attention of the audience by its 7 strings and the flag at the top. He began to
sing the 4th ashtapadi ‘chanda charchita’ of Jayadeva in Partuvarali raga, Aditala in
Shatkala and ended the performance in a ragamalika. Everyone was thrilled to ecstasy.
Thyagaraja was so much moved that he spontaneously burst out ‘Entaromahanubhavalu’
the Pancharetna in Sri raga.

The words came out in Sri raga and they formed the beginning of an
elaborate song with novel structure and followed subsequently by four other similar
songs in the ragas Nata, Goula, Arabhi and varali, and all these -together constitute the
famous panchretna Kritis an outstanding monument to the classical genius of Thyagaraja.
Marar received high compliments from Thyagaraja. It is even said that the structure of Pancharetna is based on the Govindaswami Varnams, though in the absence of enough specimens of the latter, we are unable to substantiate the claim. But it is matter for pride that Govinda Marar directly and Svati Tirunal indirectly happened to be instrumental in the composition of Pancharetna Kirtanas.

From there he proceeded to Pandaripuram and spent the rest of his life in praying and singing. It is reported that, till some fifty years ago the Tampura of Marar was preserved in the temple as valuable treasure. He passed away in the year 1843.

3. Kannayya Bhagavatkar

He was a direct disciple of the great composer Thyagaraja, when exactly he came to Travancore was not known but presumably it was after the arrival of Vadivelu. It is also possible that Vadivelu was the instrumental in bringing him to Trivandrum. Kannayya Bhagavathar, Vadivelu and Govinda Marar used to sing numerous songs of the great composer Thyagaraja before their encouraging patron, the responsive Maharaja Svati Tirunal. He ardently desired to bring the great composer to his court at least to honour him for he could not persuade him to settle down in Trivandrum. For this purpose he sent Marar, Vadivelu and for their escort their friend Nallathampi Mudaliar, the superintendent of the Royal stables who knew Thyagaraja. Strangely Kannayya Bhagavathar was not in the party, presumably because he could foresee the possible reaction of his Guru to the Maharaja's proposal and the Maharaja too did not wish to embarrass him. It was sometime 1838. The actual date of his demise is not known.
Vidwan Kilimanoor Rajaraja Varma Tampuran (987—1021)

Rajaraja Varma alias Karindran was the intimate friend of Svati Tirunal. He was born as the son of Kizhakenchery Nambutiri and Umadevi Tampuruatti of Kilimanoor Kovilakam. Both were scholars in Music and Sanskrit. His father was an expert in explaining the meanings of Srimad Bhagavatam. Rajaraja Varma, praises his father in his Ravana vijayam Attakkatha. The following are the lines.

His mother Umadevi Tampuruatti wrote a Tullal named Vishnumaya Charitam. Though his original name was Rajarajavarma, his pet name was Cherunni. At the age of ten he composed a sloka and astonished his mother. The sloka is as follows:

Rani parvati Bai came to know about the extraordinary skill of the boy, and she took the boy to Trivandrum to make him the companion of Svati Tirunal. Thus Svati Tirunal and Rajaraja varma became great friends even from the childhood. His stay
at Trivandrum gave him more help to become a great scholar in Sanskrit, a great singer, and a great poet. In 1004, when Svati Tirunal became the king he granted him a sum of Rs.100 as pension per month.

He was able to please the maharaja many times by his skill in composing poems. In the year 1015, once during the Padmanabha svami festival Svati Tirunal composed the Puravardha of a sloka and asked Koitampuran to compose the Uttarardha for the same, within no time he constructed the 2\textsuperscript{nd} pada of the sloka. The Maharaja was very much pleased that he presented a pair of diamond rings to him. The sloka is as follows:

\begin{verbatim}
dhIT\textasciitilde fh\textasciitilde Ol\textasciitilde la\textasciitilde c\textasciitilde ru\textasciitilde (2)0\textasciitilde (1)
\end{verbatim}

Once their way to beach Maharaja composed the Purvardha of another sloka about \ldots the ladies who peep through the windows on the either side of the road and asked Koitampuran to compose the uttarardha for the same. That also he did within seconds. For this he was honoured with the title ‘Vidvan’ by the maharaja. The honouring was done in front of every scholar of the court.

Once Maharaja asked the scholar of his court to compose a single sloka which describes the Lord Sri Padamanabha, as well as the Maharaja. But only Irayinman and Koitampuran could win the contest. The sloka composed by Koitampuran is as follows.

\begin{verbatim}
\end{verbatim}
In 1016 when Svati Tirunal constructed a Golden chariot for the first time, the scholars of the court composed slokas on this chariot. But there also, the slokas composed by Tampi and Koitampuran became the best. The sloka by Koitampuran is as follows:

For this sloka he was presented a pair of diamond bracelets for both hands.

Besides the title ‘Vidwan’, the Maharaja used to call his intimate friend with the pet name ‘Karindran’. It is said that Maharaja called him the pet name ‘Karindran’ because of his physical appearance. He also attained proficiency in ‘Kalippayattu’ and astrology.

But such an intimate friend of Svati Tirunal had to shift from the Palace once because of some misunderstandings of the Maharaja. At that time he submitted the following sloka to the Maharaja and thus he was able to clear the misunderstandings towards him. In this sloka he has given the ‘Karindra Mudra’.
Though he was a scholar in Sanskrit he wrote only two Kritis and a stotra named Kirata vamsati in that language. In Malayalam he wrote Ravanavijayam Attakadha and Santanagopalam Sitangatullal. This tullal is incomplete. He has also written two Muktakoms in Malayalam.

He married a Tankachy from Kallamballybhavanam at Trivandrum. He died in the year 1021 January. He was born a year before the birth of Svati Tirunal, and he died exactly a year before the death of his great royal friend. Both were born and died in the same month.

5. **Ksheerabhi Sastrikal:**

Another contemporary composer of repute was Sivaramagurudasa, a Brahmin better known as Ksheerabdi Sastrikal. His compositions are pervaded by a spirit of vedantism and he had the genious of conveying the highest vendatic truths in the simplest garb—a simplicity bordering a colloquialism. The musical merits of his
compositions are well calculated to make them to popularise. A few specimens are noted below:

The composer is reputed to have possessed marvelous spiritual powers and great equanimity of mind. The story is told how, when a child of his died, he had the coolness to take the dead body and throw it over the shoulder and to improvise the following dirge, while he was in the funeral place.

It is said that Svati Tirunal and his successor held this composer in high esteem. As to his date, there is living testimony to show that he was in Travancore till 1031 M.E., corresponding to 1865 A.D. He looked 45 when he was last seen and must have been a resident of Travancore at least for 10 years. Later he left for Tricurunjudhis native place in Trivelveli District.

6. Mallckal Krishna Marar:–

He was an adept in singing classical music, playing the indigenous drum Edakka for tala. He was introduced to Svati Tirunal by Paramesvara Bhagavathar, who had admiration for his dexterity. His native place was in Valluvanadu district in Malabar. He was teaching music in the house of Maliakkal Kartha, so that he came to be called Maliakkal Krishana Marar.
7. Nanda Ram & Mukunda Ram

In 1832 two Experts in Veena, Mukundaram and Nanda Ram from Mysore, played before Svati Tirunal and each was presented a pair of golden bracelets.

8. Paramesvara Bhagavatar:

He was a towering personality in the realm of music for more than half a century. He had the glorious record of having been chief Samstana Vidwan in the court of 4 successive rulers of Travancore Svati Tirunal, Utram Tirunal, Ayilyam Tirunal and Visakom Tirunal.

He was born in 1815 in Nurni Agraharam in Palaghat district. He was a Samantha Tamin Brahmin and belonged to the Brahacharanam. He lost his parents when he was a quiet young. He was brought up with great care by his uncle at Guruuvayur. He came into contact with a number of eminent musicians who visited Guruuvayur as pilgrimage. At the age of 16 he had acquired a great knowledge in theory and practice of music. He also acquired ability to compose in Sanskrit and Malayalam.

His contact with Svati Tirunal was accidental. It was sometime in 1832. The Maharaja was paying his routine daily visit to the Padmanabha Svami temple. A boy of 16 was melodiously singing in a high pitched voice caught his attention. He called the boy and asked him the whereabouts and came to know that he was a Brahmin, by name Paramesvaran, belonging to Palaghat and had come to Trivandrum for seeking his livelihood and that he was fond of music though he had no occasion to learn it from a master. The Maharaja was able to see his musical talents and took him into his service.
and arranged with his Palace vidvans for his regular tuition in music under his own supervision.

Paramesvara Bhagavatar was a man of piety and sound learning and possessed an excellent character. These qualities of his coupled with his musical genius endeared him to the ruler and the two became intimate friends. Endowed with versatile talents he helped the Maharaja by contributing the dhatu to some of his sahityas.

Paramesvara Bhagavathar and Svati Tirunal spent many hours together in the composition of beautiful Varnams and Kritis. The Bhagavathar has by himself composed a number of Kritis and Varnams. His Varnams are in the ragas Nata, Goula, Arabhi, Varali, Sri., Todi, Khamas, Yedukula Khamboji, Sankarabharanam, Behag and Bilhari. His Varanam ‘Sarasijinabha’ shows his skill in design and craftsmanship.

The well known composition Pancharaga svarajati of Svati Tirunal in Tripupta in the ragas Kalyani, Begada, Atana, Suruti and Todi, a fine Sanskrit sahitya beginning with words ‘Sarasabhava’ has been added. This sahitya is by Paramesvara Bhagavatar. In the last section, it is extremely mentioned that his sahitya is given to dhatu conceived by Svati Tirunal.

He was an adept in singing Tanas, and in the exposition of Pallavis, the two difficult branches of Manodharma Sangita. During festivals and at entertainments given by the Maharaja of Travancore, he was given the place of honour. Besides being a great gayaka, he was also proficient in playing veena, violin and svarabat. He was also a performer of Harikadhas. He retained the sweetness, metallic character of his voice till his last days.
Paramesvara Bhagavathar along with Ramakrishna Bhagavathar systamatised the Kathakali music. He also systamatised the singing of Sopana music sung in temples.

Amongst his disciples were his son Mahadeva Bhagavathar, who became a reputed violinist. His second son Ramakrishna Iyer was also a good musician. His other disciples were Coimbatore Raghava Iyer, Noorni Ayya Bhagavather, Kittu Bhagavather, Appu Bhagavather, Gopala Bhagavather and Sitarama Bhagavater.

Inspired by the saintliness of Thyagaraja, and tuneful, captivating and charming character of his Kritis, he expressed a strong desire to Svati Tirunal to be permitted to go to Tiruvayyar, and have darsan of the Saint. But His Highness was so much attached to Paramesvara Bhagavathar that he said, ‘You can go sometime later’. Bhagavather was patiently waiting for the permission. But unfortunately Svati Tirunal passed away on 25\textsuperscript{th} December 1846, and 12 days late Thyagaraja attained Siddhi on 6\textsuperscript{th} January 1847.

These two events coming, one after another in rapid succession gave a terrible shock to Paramesvara Bhagavathar. He took to Sanyasasram in his last days and attained Siddhi in the year 1892 in his 77\textsuperscript{th} year.

9. Ponnaiah

He is the brother of the famous violinist and singer Vadivelu, flourished during the time of Svati Tirunal. Sivanandam, Chinnaiah and Ponnaiah are of the Nattu vanar community, experts in 4 different branches of the art came from Tanjore and received the royal favour and patronage of Travancore. The youngest Ponnayya was the
only composer and a gifted one. His compositions are highly esteemed and deservedly popular. He has composed Svarajatis, Vanrams and Padams. We shall give a specimen of each. Svarajatis are pieces wholly composed of svaras and are helpful to the students in understanding the nature of ragas. They form a set of exercises preliminary to the study of Kirtanas.

1 **Svarajati**: ‘Sn dp mg rs’. This svarajati is composed in Bhairavi is studied by the beginners both in music and dance.

2 **Padam**: ‘Sadati nerasa’. This is a beautiful composition in Bhairavi and has been imitated in Malayalam and Tamil.

3 **Varnam**: Sarasijanabha in Kamboji which is very popular throughout the presidency. In beauty, stateliness, grace, and melody, it takes rank with the best compositions in Hindu music.

Ponnaiah has composed a great deal, though many of them are being forgotten by professionals as in the case of Maharaja’s compositions from a want of love of them for its own sake. Many of them deserve a better fate.

10. **Renga Itenkar and Suliman Seth**:–

It is an interesting fact that the Royal house of Travancore was the favoured house of many musicians as early as six hundred years ago. Several non-Keralite musicians also seem to have got occasion to give recitals before him. The royal patronage was extended with earnestness to the Hindustani form also. Among the several representatives of this system in the court were Renga Iyenkar, who was an expert in
veena and vocal, from Tanjore and Syed Sulaiman Seth, master of svarabatt. They were contemporaries of Tampi and they were permanent employees of Maharaja Svati Tirunal.

11. Renganath Iyer:–

He was one among the musicians in the valiakottaram and also the contemporary of Paramesvara Bhagavathar, Kittu Bhagavathar etc. He was the son of Brhamssree Sankara Bhatta Sastrikal, who was the member in the Sangita renga of Sangita Kalanidhi Merusvami. He has done many things to promote classical music. He earned knowledge in music by reading many books in music. These are all reflected in his own book ‘Sangita renga’ which is written and published in many volumes. The composition svarajatis, Geethams and Varnams ..; . composed by Trinity, and others are given with notations in their books. It is very useful especially to the beginners in music.

12. Sivanandam :-

He was one among the group of 4 musicians from Tanjore, popularly known as Tanjore quartette. They all are the disciples of the famous composer Muthusvami Deekshitar. Sivananda was an adept in playing Mridangam.

13. Subba Rao:–

He was the Divan of Travancore Court during the reign of Svati Tirunal maharaja. He was called as Tanjore Subbarao. It was he who taught the Maharaja the English language in his childhood, was a pioneer in music. He trained Maharaja to play the Vadya Svarabat. He was an adept in Mridangam playing. He had also played Mridangam when the Maharaja was singing. He was to a large extent instrumental in discerning the aptitude and shaping the interests of his distinguished pupil and making
him the great patron of arts and letters so as to be considered 11th century ruler and writer and promoter of arts Maharaja Bhoja of Dhar.

14. Subbukutty Iyya:-

The famous veena player and grand son of Pachimaram Adiyappayya. Actually he was in the services of Putukotta Reghunatha Tondaiman and he was brought to Svati Tirunal’s court after lots of correspondence with the Maharaja of Putukotta by Diwan Subba Rao. Respecting Maharaja’s wish, Subbukutty decided to settle down in Trivandrum itself like Merusvami. Subbukutty Ayya was the first to give an individual concert in Veena at Maharaja’s Palace at Trivandrum.

15. Vadivelu :-

The last brother of Tanjore quartette, Vadivelu (1810 to 1845) was in the service of the illustrious Maharaja Svati Tirunal of Trvancore and assisted him in most of his technical and melodical compositions. He was paid only one rupee less than Merusvami.

He was responsible along with Balusvami Deekshitar, the brother of Mutusvami Deekshitar, for the introduction of violin in Karnatic music. This attempt of Vadivelu to adopt it into our music generally met with the approval of the patrons and the encouragement of the public, as our music has never been averse to incorporate and assimilate exotic elements that would add its charm without affecting its basic framework. In appreciation of Vadivelu’s service in the introduction of violin in classical music, and his profound skill in handling it, the Maharaja presented him an ivory violin,
which was made by a native craftsman. This beautiful violin is still cherished as a valuable treasure by the descendants of Vadivelu at Tanjore.

Vadivelu is also famous as having been one of the very few to whom the Saint composer of Tiruvayyar extended his friendship and intimacy. Thyagaraja used to listen in raft ecstasy to the divine strains that flowed from the fingers of Vadivelu.

Śvāti Tirunal found in Vadivelu a worthy consultant and a ready collaborator in his compositions for Bharathanatyam like Varnams, Svarajatis, Padams and Tillanas. This close association naturally led to intimacy. Vadivelu became the frequent recipient of gifts of money and materials. But some misunderstanding was there in between the Maharaja and Vadivelu for a short period for some unknown reason. He even changed his residence from Trivandrum to Haripad. But at the intervention of some senior musicians in the court like Paramesvara Bhagavathar, Irayimman Tampi etc., the two were reconciled and in gratitude Vadivelu composed a Varnam in praise of Maharaja in Nātaraga and presented it in a dance recital before him. At the end of performance Śvāti Tirunal appreciated his skill displayed in the song as well as its presentation in the court, but as an anticlimax, as it were of all this appreciation warned him not to use it again. Vadivelu was perplexed and begged to be pardoned for any mistake he might have inadvertently committed. The Maharaja replied ‘the song in praise of me; it must have been in His praise; music is not worth its name if it has any lower aim’. Vadivelu became sad and wise and the next day he presented the same vamam with changed sahitya, praising Lord Padmanabha and representing Śvāti Tirunal as Padmanabha Dasa and got his appreciation. This is the Atatala vamam ‘Sammugamu’ in Nata. His other two famous padavarnams are Sarasijanabha (now regarded by the professionals themselves as
the Tana varnam, denuded of the sahitaya that was built upon the frame work of the svaras and charanas) and Samininne in yadukula Kamboji. The value of the pieces as dance materials and abhinaya models they are beyond praise. In the second varnam the arohana is sarima according to the rules but the composer had taken a leap over the barricades and barbed wire fencing and given to a new combination ‘rm sm pm’.

Vadivelu had a genius for thrilling royalty with his skill and an equal capacity to incur royal displeasure.

Some say that Vadivelu Nattuvamar was Thyagaraja’s violinist for some time at Thiruvayyar. He went over to Trvancore in 1830 and passed away in 1845.

As a composer he used to visit Thyagaraja to sing his compositions but the saint composer was the last man to vouch an appreciative nod to any strain. But when Vadiveu sang a Telugu Padam ‘Naa Sami Ika Naa Meeda daya juda rada’ in Purvikalyani raga, Thyagaraja went in to raptures and held the musician in high esteem.

Vadivelu won not only over Princess, rasikas and musicians but also high way men who tried to mullet him of his earnings. The famous musician Coimbatore Raghavier was the disciple of Chidambara Nattuvamar, the grandson of Vadivelu. This is referred in the ‘Travancore music and musicians’ by T. Lekshmana Pillai.

At Madras Vadivelu trained Ambayiram to play the vilin. Two among his ragamalikas of his inventive brain (Kalyani and Saanantam) are treasured by his sishya parambarama with great pride.

The Kerala version of Bharatanatyam is Mohiniattam implanted by Vadivelu deep in the soil under the guidance of Svati Tirunal.
During the dance performance he accompanied himself on the fiddle, verily it was a feast fit for the Gods and brought down to our dark full earth the faint echoes of the glories of Indrasabhai, where flitted part in many dance of Rambha, Urvasi, Menaka and Tilottama casting upon the audience, the charm of woven paces and waving hands while the dim background swell fourth the witching music of the golden throated gandharva, Thumburu, Visvavasu and their like.

The Tanjore brothers had 'Sankar vilas' built for them in 'chalai' street at Trivandrum by Svati Tirunal. The brothers were very much attached to one another. When Vadivelu fell seriously ill, the other three invoked their family deity Brihadamba in Sankarabharanam, to help him to tide over the crisis. Vadivelu died in 1845. He had no children but he had adopted a girl for whose marriage the treasury has sanctioned a sum of Rs.700. This branch of the family and also Vadivelu's music continue to live in Travancore today.

Here I came to the conclusion that the period of Tampi was the golden period of the art in Travancore. Tampi took a sincere effort to enrich the quality of the court of Travancore royalty by introducing the scholars like Kochu Pilla Warrier etc. This shows that how he loved the royal family. The combination of the musicians and composers like His Highness Svati Tirunal, Tampi, Uttram Tirual, Ayilyam Tirunal, Kilimanoor Ilaya Tampuran, Karindran, Shatkala Govinda marar, Paramesvara Bhagavatar, Tanjore quartette etc are to be specially mentioned in spending their life to enrich the field of classical, Kathakali and Sopana music.

Among the innumerable writings extending to fifty and above on various subjects by the mentioned composers, mention is made on the works only in view of their relevance with the poet and his contributions, providing also a way for others a comparative study with those of the poet.