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## MYSORE WODAYAR'S RICH CONTRIBUTION TO THE GROWTH OF RESPECTIVE ARTS.

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### Abstract

In this paper an attempt has been made to deal with the contribution of Wodayars of Mysore towards arts. The Wodayars of Mysore kingdom were perhaps the most celebrated and legendary ruling dynasties that history witnessed through the centuries. The Mysore court contributed greatly to the field of the culture, tradition, music art and literature.

**Keywords:** Wodayars, Mysore, Patron, KrishnadevarajaWodayar , JayachamararajaWodayar, royal king, Musicians, dancers, music, compositions, composers, Mysore style, art and culture, contribution, patronage.

Mysore is known as the "Cultural Capital" of the state and is a fine combination of the historic heritage and contemporary achievements of the city. As a land of the mighty maharajas Mysore has always been an appealing place of grandeur. The Wodayars were patrons of the cultural growth of the city. Significantly to the cultural growth of the city the continuous patronage and support of the kings in every field led to the evolution of a distinct style known as the "Mysore style" in all the fields like painting, architecture music, dance and poetry etc.

### Introduction

Indian classical dance forms features more significant in one form that might not be found in other style. Although it has the origin – natyasastra an Indian dance forms are formed with their own principles and distinctiveness, these dance forms has marched forward gradually attaining new dimensions and thus flourished independently. An abundance of early literary references to the dance of humans and gods may be found in vedic and past vedic literature, epic poetry and the puranas. The art reached its zenith with immense popularity and enjoyed patronage during 4 century AD to 12 century AD. Devadasi system was prevalent and the Puri Jagannath temple had supported hundreds of devadasis who contributed to the evolvement of the art form. Right from Chalukya dynasty followed by Chola dynasty poured its patronage for music and dance. Monumental carvings in the Halabidu and Beluru temples reveals the story of the great hoysalays. After the fall of Vijayanagara Empire the art of dance was nurtured by the devadasi off temple dance.

Yaduraya founded Wodeyar dynasty whereas Raja Wodeyar (1578-1617) took over independent governance of Mysore samsatana. The culture and traditions were followed and gradually gained progressive prominence. Raja wodeyar started celebrating Mysore Dasara festival of Srirangapatna as a part of wodeyar dynasty which was previously celebrated by Vijayanagar Empire .The cultural heritage of Karnataka has been quite glorious right from the satvahana period. The benevolence of Karnataka rulers to the field of arts architecture, music painting had immensely influenced the growth of respective arts. An innumerable inscription refers to the musicians, musicologist, grants were given by the king to the dancers, drummers, vainikas at the kalameswara temple at kalagi.

The contribution of Karnataka kings in preserving and uploading the Indian cultural from Muslim invasion was the course monumental. Hence it is called Carnatic (Karnataka ) music. Classical music in Karnataka has a great antiquity, the musicians

and musicologists occupied a place of pride and honors in the court. The kings considered it as a privilege to extend patronage to music and musicians through which the concerts were well organized and the composition were well defined.

## RESURGENCE OF ARTS

Karnataka's royalty not only patronized the art form but also themselves as great artists and scholars. They organized a school in Srirangapatana where Bharatanatyam used to teach the art form to the young maidens. The dance was accomplished in the state of Mysore became a resurgence of all arts form under the Wodeyar dynasty. It gave a great seat of learning and patronage to all kinds of art and artistes. Bharatanatyam in Karnataka reached its peak during this period. The dance tradition which developed around the city of Mysore made it a focus of culture in India and its influence was extensive. Generous patronage to musicians and dancers in the Mysore place is not specified, however records are only available from the time of king Randheerakanteerava Narasaraja Wodeyar (1638) During the reign of Chikkadeveraja Wodeyar (1673-1704) the court poetess Honnamma speaks the beauty of courtesans performing at the court.

Though all the Mysore kings patronized the art, the golden age was considered to be during the reign of kings

Krishnaraja Wodeyar – III (1794- 1868)

Chamaraja Wodeyar – IX (1862 – 1894)

Krishnaraja Wodeyar – IV (1884- 1940)

Jayachamaraja Wodeyar (19191 – 1974)

## Mummadi- Javali king

During Krishnaraja Wodeyar – III Mysore state became a center stage for innumerable cultural activities and a distinct style began to emerge which came to be known as Mysore style. Krishnaraja Wodeyar – III is the scholar- patron of the arts. Under his patronage, musicians and dance exponents migrated to Mysore and made Mysore as an epicenter of music and dance. Krishnaraja Wodeyar was the contemporary of the great trinity composers of Carnatic music which included Muthuswami Dikshitar, ShyamaShastri and Thygaraja and Dance exponents called Tanjore Quartet of the brothers Ponnaiah, Chinnaiah, Sivananda and Vadevelu. Krishnaraja Wodeyar – III shifted his capital from Srirangapatana to Mysore and beautified his court with assemblage of several great dance artists from various dance schools all over the kingdom. He started few branches to enhance the flow of the Mysore style of Bharatanatyam, hence the style got its shelter under royal patronage of Krishnaraja Wodeyar and known even today as the Mysore school. He was a trained musician, musicologist and a composer himself. Being a devotee of the Hindu goddesses "Chamundeshwari", the king wrote all his compositions under the mudra "Chamundi" or Chamundeshwari". His period was an important period in the development of vocal and the instrument Carnatic music. It was only because of the Wodeyar dynasty assumed power and prestige in the state of Mysore, particularly Mummadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar who had interest in music and fine arts made serious effort and developed the art. Mummadi himself was a composer of merit and succeeding ruler of Wodeyar dynasty. Music and fine arts were patronized during his regime, resulting in many musicians from neighboring states settling down in Mysore. Mummadi composed many philosophically themed "Javali" and devotional songs in Kannada under the title "Nubhaava Pancharathana", a Javali in Carnatic music had their roots in Mysore and first mentioned in the king's writing as Javadi. Being a writer himself Krishnaraja also encouraged various other forms of literature including Yakshagana. He is responsible for the growth and survival of yakshagana form of literature. He supported and encouraged the famous yakshagana writers Veena Venkatasubbia who hailed from the family of veena artist and was appointed as music teacher to the king Mummadi by his minister Purnai, who wanted to make Mysore, a cultural center of South India. The tradition of special Darbar (royal court) in Mysore palace was arranged during the Dasara festival under Krishnaraja Wodeyar in 1805. The day on Vijayadasami, a big procession of colorful dance groups, music bands, decorated horses and camels are connected from Mysore palace to Bannimantap. Many music and dance concerts are conducted in various auditoriums of Mysore even today.

Krishnadevaraja Wodeyar – III initiated the Cultural Revolution by patronizing poet's writer and dancers. Mummadi successfully persuaded Amrutappa as the head of the Astana troupe is interesting to note that he continued to hold the post

for 3 generation of Mysore rulers. He created a sprawling cultural eco system where musicians received patronage, honors and recognition for their talent and were able to live comfortably.

During the rule of Krishnaraja Wodeyar III, the composers who have enriched the love of Carnatic music in the state of Mysore included Mysore Sadasiva Rao, Veena Venkatasubbayya, Lingaraj Urs, Basavappa Sastry, Veena Shamanna, Veena Padmanabhaiah, Veena Seshanna, Veena Subbanna, Karigiri Rao, Mysore Vasudevacharya, Bidaram Krishnappa, Giribhattara Tammaya, Nanjangud SubbaSastry, Chandrashekara Sastry, Veena Subramanialyer, H. Muthiah Bhagavatar, Veena Shivaramaiah, Veena Venkatagiriappa, Belakavadi Srinivasalyengar, Chikka Rama Rao, Mysore T. Chowdiah, Jayachamaraja Wodeyar, C. Rangaiah, Chennakeshavaiah, R. N. Doreswamy, H. Yoganasimham, Bangalore Mukund and R. Vishveshwaran.

Most of their compositions were set in Telugu and Sanskrit. However, some of them have composed in Kannada also. Chickadevaraja Wodayar (1672-1704) was the composer of dance dramas of Geeta Gopala and chikadevaraya Sapatapadi. Geeta Gopala consists of seven songs known as Sapatapadi. The songs were written in Kannada and Telugu in form of Padam and Javali for the dance choreography.

R. Satyanarayana in his book "Bharathanatyam" mentioned about chikadevaraya sapatapadi and also described the situation of the first song of the fourth Sapatapadi about annual dance performance before the king. He also quoted such was the greatness of these Mysore Wodayar to Bharathanatyam as a firm convention of Rajavandana (Sabhapativandana) through which high laudation in a Curnika came to be established in their courts.

### **Chamaraja Wodayar- Patron of the arts**

Chamaraja Wodayar was also a patron of the music and arts. Veena Sheshanna and Veena Subbanna were his tutor and court musicians. The king was well versed in the violin and used to accompany Subbanna's vocal and Seshanna's veena and performance at Krishnan temple located in the palace premises took place. He appointed Chinnaiyya in his court who had composed several Varnams and Thillana for Bharathanatyam margam. He motivated the musicians and dance gurus to present their performance in the royal court which led to the success to the continuous flow of music and dance style in Karnataka. His fondness for Javali's earned him the nickname 'Javali King' it was during his rule that Jetty Thayamma introduced the new technique "Jaradavu". In the 19th and 20th century Mysore has produced many distinguished dance teachers like Muguru Subanna, Amritappa, Dasappa, Bangalore Kittappa, Gndappa Kolar Puttappa and Great eminent dancers like Amritamma, Coimbatore Tayi, Nagaratnamma, Jatti Tayamma and her disciple Venkatalakshamma. Alongside the palace dancers the Asthanavidushi's existed the temple dancers or devadasis like Rangamma and Jeejamma. Hence, the indigenous tradition of dance took in the other tradition to arrive at a continuous stream of dance art in Karnataka. He sponsored Mysore Vasudevacharya to get training at Tiruvayyur under the famous Patanam Subbramanya Iyer. Veena Subramanya wrote and published "Sangeeta Samyasara" in 1915. A very influential musician and composer Dr. L. Muthiah Bhagavathar from Thirunelveli who was a disciple of Samabasivalyer was appointed as court musician at Mysore by King Krishnaraja Wodayar IV. This famous musician credited one hundred and eight Chamundeshwari krities in Kannada, 108 Shivastatara composition in Sanskrit and important treatise on music in Tamil called the Sangeetha Kalapadsuma. These were some contributions to the music of Bharathanatyam and in the process of evolution of Bharathanatyam Mysore palace had groups of parallel under Ballpure Bhavanamma, Jatti Thayamma's disciple Venkatalakshammaamma, Muguru Thayakka, Mysore Jayalakshamma. Though the system of devadasi was eliminated, the offering of pujas in the form of dance to show Bhakthi had its impact. The art was given a high importance in Mysore and all the artists got highest remuneration during his period. Chamaraja Wodayar paved the way for a new tradition which was duly continued by his successors. His passion for good music, induced him to invite Abdulkarim Khan to Mysore. The Dussara music festival turned into a real treat as Khan Sahib rendered an immortal Todi. Chamaraja Wodayar established Chamarajendra Nataka Sabha to promote drama activity in the city. Chamaraja's impartial love for music persuaded him to invite Vidwans like Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer, Patanam Subbrammannay Iyer, Tirukkudikaval Krishna Iyer from Tamilnadu as Asthana Vidwans. Chamaraja conceived an idea of a palace orchestra which was accomplished by his son Krishnarajendra Wodayar -IV

## “Rajashri” Nalvadiwodayar

**Krishnaraja Wodayar– IV** This period was an important era of music in Mysore especially for kannada compositions. The king himself was educated and was knowledgeable in Tamil and Sanskrit. He was well versed in playing musical instruments including the Veena, Violin, Mrindangam, Nagaswaram. Sitar and Harmonium as well as western instruments such as the saxophone and piano. He encouraged his musicians to compose Carnatic, Hindustani and western style of music. He also founded a music school for teaching music. Krishnadevaraja Wodayar abolished devadasi’s practice way back in 1909 before it was banned in Madras. He kept the dance in its peak. The dancers were from different dance styles performed in the scheduled duration. Such was the prevalence of dance. Mysore Palace had 5 types of different Bharatanatyam dance groups performing parallelly under Ballapur Bhavanamma, JattiThayamma’s disciple Venkatalakshamma, MuguruThayakka, Mysore Jayalakshamma, TirumakudaluChandravadanamma. The main subject of dance in the Palace was Bhakti. The duration of the dance program was scheduled. The dancers were from different dance styles inherited through Guru-Shishya paramparas. In the past two centuries (19th and 20th). Mysore had produced many illustrious dance teachers like MuguruSubbanna, Amrutappa, Dasappa, Bangalore Kittappa, KolarPuttappa, and great dancers like Amritamma, Coimbatore Thayi, Nagaratnamma, the incomparable JattiThayamma, and her disciple Venkatalakshamma. Alongside the palace dancers (the AsthanaVidushis), existed the temple dancers or Devadasis like Rangamma, and Jeejamma-with high standard soft technical excellence and profound scholarship.

Krishnaraja wodeyar – IV was very keen about selecting his Durbar Musicians. Pitil ushivarudrappa is literally a product of this king’s generosity for music and musicians. The blind boy shivarudrappa was taken care by the king. He granted him a scholarship and appointed as AsthnaVidwan. He established a good orchestra in the palace for Carnatic, Hindustani and western music. He exposed his palace musicians to all types of music and wanted them to incorporate the virtues of different styles of music.

Krishnaraja wodeyar – IV established university of Mysore in 1916 and he was known to be the best administrator in the world. He was rewarded as “Rajashri” by Mahatma Gandhi. Several musicians and dancers were present in his royal court where as “Barkutulla” Khan served until his death.

## Jayachamaraja Wodayar-Connoisseur of Music

An avid fan of music was the last scion of the Wodayar dynasty par excellence in every field he explored. **Jayachamaraja Wodayar** was a great composer and a connoisseur of music and he was well trained in classical western music piano and later in Carnatic classical music. A special mention must be made of his multi-faceted personality as composer- philosopher, scholar, author etc. Before he ascended the throne the Maharaja underwent training in Carnatic vocal music from Mysore Vasudevachari and in veena with Veena Venkalagiriyyaya who later blossomed and bore wonderful fruits and cherished in south Indian music with stalwarts like Ariyakkundi Remanuja Iyengar and Vardachariar. With his immense knowledge of Sanskrit and philosophy, he composed a large number of composition were modeled after Mutthuswami Dikshitar. All 90 songs of his composition are supposed to be available in print. Specifically 11 are on ganapathi, 13 are on shiva, 4 on Vishnu, 2 on Saraswathi, 1 on Gayathiri and rest on goddess Parvathi and Lakshmi with the mudra “Srividyā” (penname). He invented many rare minor ragams and used 30 mala ragam for krithi upon the deity kanchipuram (kamakshi, Eramreshvare) arunachalanatha (Tiruvanammalai) Madhurai, shrngEri, etc. His contribution was awarded an honorary doctorate and was made a fellow of “Sangeetha Natak Academy” Having a thorough knowledge of music, veena and dance, he also encouraged various singers, dancers and instrumentalists in his court like Mysore Vasudevachar, Veena Venkatagiriyyappa, B. Devendrappa, R.N. Doreswamy, H.M. Vaidyalinga Bhagavatar, Titte Krishna Iyengar, etc. Mysore Sri V. Ramarathnam had written a book about the patronage and contribution of Wodeyars to Carnatic music in 1980s. Jayachamrajendra took very little time to know and grasp his native music. His court was overflowing with the music of veterans like Vasudevachar, Chowsaiah, Venkatagiriyyappa and others. He took every chance to listen and immediately written along with swaraprastara (notation) and sent to the library. Asthana vidwans Vasudevachar and Veene Venkatagiriyyappa were his teachers for vocal and veena respectively. His court became the real temple of music, dance musicians and dancers.

“Venkatalakshamma, was hired at the Royal Court by Nalwadi Krishna Raja Wodeyar. She learnt the lessons of Bharatnātyam from Nātya Saraswati JattiThayamma. She served the royalties for 30 long years for dancing in front of Mysore kings, she

continued her journey till the last king Jayachama rajendra Wodeyar. Later, she became a reader of dance at the fine arts college founded by JayachamarajWodeyar under University of Mysore. She had been awarded with the central and state academy awards – NāṭyaShantala (the highest award for a dancer in Karnataka) and Padma Bhushan by Government of India." "Srikantadatta Wodeyar ascended the throne in 1974 A.D. after the demise of his father Jayachama rajendra Wodeyar. He continued the legacy of conducting Mysore Dasara with the rituals as performed by his ancestors till his death in 2013 A.D."

To conclude, Mysore itself a classic profile of fusion and a mutual adoption of different cultures. It was the center of synthesis of culture of Wodayar. The royal Carnatic orchestra was connected to India from east to west in the Mysore royal court. Mysore came to be connected among the more developed and urbanized regions of India from 1799-1947 Mysore emerge as one of the important center of art and culture in India. The British restored the Wodayars to their throne by way of subsidiary alliance and diminished Mysore which was transformed into one of the princely states. The Mysore kings not only helped in making the art forms to reach it's zenith but also made their legacies continue to influence music and art even today.

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