

Akkarai S Sornalatha

Akkarai S Sornalatha is a prodigious Indian classical (Carnatic) violinist and vocalist whose soulful music has captivated the hearts of music lovers worldwide.

Sornalatha hails from a musical family; her grandfather Suchindram Shri S P Sivasubramaniam was a multifaceted genius renowned as a violinist, vocalist, composer, and teacher; and her grandmother Smt R Sornambal was a Harikatha exponent and a music teacher. Sornalatha is the disciple of her father, Akkarai Shri S Swamynathan, a veteran violinist and teacher who runs the Swara Raga Sudha school of music. Under his intensive training, she made her concert debut by the tender age of eight. She is the younger sister of the renowned violinist and vocalist Akkarai S Subhalakshmi, and, performing together as 'Akkarai Sisters', they hold the unique distinction of being highly sought-after as both vocalists and violinists worldwide. Sornalatha also trained under Shri O V Subramaniam and his daughter Smt Padma Natesan of New Delhi, and later on under Padmabhushan Shri P S Narayanaswamy and Chitravina Shri N Ravikiran.

Sornalatha's acclaimed style of playing, characterised by a sweet tone and sensitive fingering, is a confluence of intellect and aesthetics. She has also touched the hearts of many through her vocal music with her soulful and creative style. She has played with several leading musicians such as T M Krishna, Hyderabad Sisters, S Shashank, Kunnakudi M Balamuralikrishna, Abhishek Raghuram and many others, and is known for her skill in blending with the music and enhancing it artfully. She has toured widely in India and abroad, including North America, Australia, Singapore, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, UK, Switzerland, Ireland, Spain, and so on. She has been featured at many prestigious venues, such as a special duet concert with her sister for the Emperor and Empress of Japan and the Chief Minister and Governor of Tamil Nadu in 2013, Kalman Sultanik Confederation House (Israel), Umeå Jazz festival (Sweden), and so on. She has also given talks and lecture- demonstrations on Carnatic music and Indian classical violin at Trivandrum Music College, Royal Music College in Stockholm (Sweden), and many more.

Sornalatha is also a composer with creatively crafted compositions in Tamil, Telugu, Hindi and Sanskrit to her credit.

Sornalatha is a gold medalist MA music graduate from the University of Madras and an A-Grade artiste in both vocal and violin at All India Radio and Doordarshan; her many other honours include Kalashree, Sangeetha Bhaskara, Yuva Kala Bharathi, the Vipanchee Award, Isai Chemmal (Trinity Mirror, 2012), the gold medal at the national intercollegiate competition at Kurukshetra (2005-06 academic year), the first prize in the Shanti Arts Foundation & Endowment's Ragam Tanam Pallavi competition (2008), the Best Violinist award from the Indian Fine Arts Society (2007), and the Kalki Krishnamurthy Memorial Award (2018). She also received the Shanmukha Sangeeta Shiromani from the Shanmukhananda Sabha Mumbai (2009), Outstanding Vocalist award by the Music Academy (2015), the Yuva Purandara Award from Indiranagar Sangeetha Sabha, Bangalore (2016) and Senior best Instrumentalists award by the Music Academy (2022) together with her sister. The sisters received the most prestigious Tamilnadu State Government Award "Kalaimamani", for the year 2019 & Vocational Excellence Award by Rotary Club of Chennai Presidency (2023).

She has released many duet albums with her sister, such as 'Ananda Tandavam', a vocal duet in their early teens, as well as 'Double Bow', 'Inta Saukhyam', and Charsur's December Season series. A highly sought-after guru, she has benefited students around the world with her knowledge and experience.

She attributes all her success to her gurus, especially her father Akkarai Shri S Swamynathan, who established her as a musician and continues to guide her.