

# Thyagaraja

March 27, 2021

## About Thyagaraja

- Tyagaraja, born May 4, 1767, Madras Presidency (Tamil Nadu) and died January 6, 1847, Madras Presidency (Tamil Nadu)
- Indian composer of Carnatic songs of the genre kirtana, or kriti (devotional songs), and of ragas.
- He is the most prominent person in the history of southern Indian classical music, and he is venerated by contemporary Carnatic musicians.
- He spent much of his life at the court of Tanjore (now Thanjavur),.Most of Tyagaraja's songs were in praise of Rama, who, like Krishna, is believed to be an incarnation of the god Vishnu.
- Tyagaraja became a devotee of Vaishnava at an early age and is regarded as an exponent of gana-marga—i.e., salvation through devotional music.
- **Thyagaraja Aradhana**, a week-long commemorative annual music festival is held in his honour, where thousands of Carnatic musicians from all over the world converge. Also, a crater on the planet Mercury is named 'Thyagaraja' in his honour.
- He is known for his three main compositions:
  - Panchratna Kiriti
  - Prahalada Bhakti Vijayam
  - Nauka Charitam
- He is considered the head of Trinity major composers who flourished at Tanjore in the early 19th century, the others being **Muthuswami Dikshitar and Syama Sastri**.

## Contributions to Indian classical music

- Use over 60 ragas for kirtanas (chant of mantras) and have availed 250 ragas.

- Composed several kritis (music composition set to certain raga and fixed tala) and was the first composer to perfect kriti. –
- Said to have sung about 24,000 songs
- Introduced the concept of 'Sangati' (variations on melodic line of a composition).
- Wrote several songs in unusual 'Apurva ragas', composed songs in lesser used Melakarta Ragas and his Pancharatna kritis are in a class by themselves since they consisted of a pallavi, anupallavi and multiple charanams (parts of kritis).
- Composed 'Utsava Sampradaya kirtanas' and 'Divyanama Sankirtanas' for adoption in bhajans and festivals.