

Kalaimamani Dr. Krishna Balesh

(Indian Classical Shehnai Artist)
(Classical Vocalist, Ghazal Singer, Playback Singer, Cine Musician)



Artist Name - **Dr. Krishna Balesh Bhajantri**
MAIN GENRE - **Hindustani Classical “B HIGH” GRADE Shehnai Player**
OTHER GENRE - **Classical Hindustani Vocalist, Playback Singer, Ghazal Singer, Playback Musician and Sufi Singer.**
Son of - **Pandit Dr. S. BALLESH BHAJANTRI (Shehnai player),**
Caste - **Scheduled Caste (SC), Bhajantri Samaj, Korawar, Koram, Korava, Kuravan**
Date of Birth - **05-11-1982, Age 38years,**
Place of Birth - **Bailoor, Belgaum District, Karnataka State**
State - **Chennai, Tamilnadu,**
Shehnai Playing family - **5th Generation Shehnai player family from MK.Hubli, Karnataka,**
Performed Shehnai - **Classical Performing platform - All Over India and Abroad (in worldwide many countries, still now, more than 32years),**
Played Shehnai since the age of **8 years, accompanying his father and grandfather -**
Has played for the recording for many **Music Composers of India, across 16 Languages from 1990 to 2020 still now,**
State Awards - Tamilnadu Government jointly honored Krishna and his father Pandit Dr. S. Balesh with, the Tamilnadu State’s Highest Civilian Award, **Kalaimamani in 2020 (Joint Award along with his father) by Iyal Isia Nataka Maanram by chief minister.**
Andhra Pradesh Government honored him with **SriKalahasti Aasthana Vidwan Award (Joint Award along with his father) in 2006,**
Uttar Pradesh India Tourism Varanasi, Government of India conferred **Ustad Bismillah Khan KalaRatna Samman 2021 Award (Joint Award along with his father) in Benaras along with Deepika Cultural Society, Varanasi,**
He was conferred with **"The Honorary Doctorate" D.Litt., award (Honoris Causa) by The International Tamil University,**
Government of India, Ministry of Culture invited Balesh and his son Krishna Balesh for **Sangeet Sangam International Music Festival in 2021 (Senior Musicians) organised Kendra Sangeet Nataka Akademi, Delhi.**

Brief Details :

Gurus & Gharanas

Krishna is disciple of World renowned Shehnai Maestro **“Bharat Ratna” Ustad Bismillah Khan Sahab,** He was under Ustadji’s footsteps - **Guru Shishya Parampara** guidance for nearly 20years. Krishna is a disciple of **“Padmashri” Ustad Rashid Khan and “Padmashri” Pandit M. Venkatesh**

Kumar, Krishna has received blessings from Padma Vibushan Pandit Puttaraj Gawai of Gadag Veereshwara Punyashrama.

Krishna plays Shehnai for “Padma Vibhushan” Maestro Ilaiyaraaja, “Thenisai Thendral” Deva “Padma Bhushan” ‘Oscar Winner’ A.R. Rahman, Bahubali Music Composer MM. Keeravani, Naadbrahma Hamsalekha & other Music Composers of South and North India and currently he is playing for all 2020 new music composers from India.

Krishna has played Shehnai and Sung with Kannada superstar Actor Dr. Rajkumar, PB. Sreenivas, KJ Yesudas, S.P. Balasubrahmanyam, S.Janaki, P.Susheela, Chitra, Bombay Jaishree, Malaysia Vasudevan, Hariharan, Shankar Mahadevan, Kailash Kher, Sivamani, Mano, Sadhana Sargam, Shreya Goshal. He has sung and played shehnai for more than 2,500 background-score and 4,000 film songs and around 7,000 devotional songs. He has also sung Hindustani music Alaaps for films and had also collaborated Shehnai with International musicians in recordings.

About the Artiste :

Surmani Dr. Krishna Balleesh (Krishna Balleesh Bhajantri) is a **Shehnai** artiste following the Benares gharana style. He is also a **Patiala gharana, Kirana - Gwalior and Rampur Sahaswana Gharana** Hindustani vocalist and a **Ghazal** singer. He is an Akashvani All India Radio and Doordarshan “B High” Grade Hindustani Classical Shehnai/Vocalist Artist. Krishna Balleesh is honored by 2 states, Tamilnadu Government honored him with **Tamilnadu State’s Highest Civilian Award, Kalaimamani** in 2020, award given by Honorable Chief Minister **Shri. Dr. Edappadi K. Palaniswami**, in presence of Chairman Eyal Isai Nataka Manaram and **Andhra Pradesh Government** honored him with **SriKalahasti Aasthana Vidwan Award** in 2006 at SriKalahasti Temple, Chittoor Andhra Pradesh Government

Uttar Pradesh, India Tourism Varanasi, Government of India conferred **Ustad Bismillah Khan KalaRatna Samman 2021 Award** (Joint Award along with his father) in Benaras along with Deepika Cultural Society, Varanasi,

He was conferred with **"The Honorary Doctorate" D.Litt., award** (Honoris Causa) by The International Tamil University.

In 2021, the **Government of India, Ministry of Culture** invited Balleesh and his son Dr. Krishna Balleesh for **Sangeet Sangam International Music Festival** (for Senior Musicians) organised Kendra Sangeet Nataka Akademi, Delhi.

Dr. Krishna Balleesh is from a family of renowned Shehnai players from **M.K. Hubli (Belgaum District)**, Karnataka- tracing back to Court musicians to the ruling Lingaraja Dynasty , with a performance history of over **50decades (500years)**. He is located in Chennai for nearly 36years in Saligramam, Chennai City.

He received his initial Shehnai training from his Grandfather, Shehnai Samrat Pt. **Sanna Bharamanna** who was a famous Shehnai player and later he learned from Dr. DP. Hiremath Guruji and continued from his father “Karnataka Kalashree” Shehnai Chakravarthy Pandit **Dr. S.Balleesh**.

Krishna was then accepted by Shehnai virtuoso Bharat Ratna **Ustad Bismillah Khan** saheb as his disciple, and is one of the Six, and only direct disciple of the maestro.

Krishna was with **Ustad Bismillah Khan** for 12years and got worldwide acclaim for performing the shehnai for more than three decades. He has accompanied **Ustad Bismillah Khan Saheb** on several occasions.

He is an Akashvani All India Radio and Doordarshan "B High" Grade Hindustani Classical Shehnai/Vocalist Artist.

Vocal Style of Krishna Balleesh

Equally accomplished vocal artiste, Krishna Balleesh learnt from his grandfather Pandit Sanna Bharamanna Gawai and continued KiranaGharana from Dr. D.P. Hiremath, Patiala Gharana from Pandit Kodanda Singh SalunkeMaharaj & Pt.Prakash Singh Salunke and received blessings from Padma Bhushan Pt. Puttaraja Gawai (Gadag), He has given vocal support to Padmashri Pandit M. Venkatesh Kumar, He is presently learning Rampur Sahaswana Gharana and performing with his Guru Padmashri Ustad Rashid Khan.

Awards/Recognition Received

Because of his accomplished performances, dedication and commitment towards music, he has received numerous awards and to mention few,

Classical Music Awards :

1. **Ustad Bismillah Khan KalaRatna Samman 2021 Award (Joint Award along with his son) in Benaras by India Tourism Varanasi, Government of India and Deepika Cultural Society, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh**
2. **Kalaimamani Award 2020, The Highest Civilian Award Given by Government of Tamilnadu by Honorable Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami, in presence of Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam, Minister for Tamil Culture and Language MaFoi K. Pandiarajan, Chairman Shri. Deva Tamilnadu Iyal Isai Nataka Manram**
3. **YuvaKala Sangeet Samrat Award 2020, INDO-NEPAL Music Meditation Series organized by Anu Dhvani Art and Cultural Society, Delhi**
4. **Kala Aparanji Award 2020, Given by Pandit Bhimsen Music Foundation Gadag, Karnataka**
5. **Smt. Leena Gupta Memorial Award 2019, Leena Gupta Memorial Music Foundation, Silchar, Assam**
6. **Mahatma Gandhi Award 2019, Gandhi 150th International Peace Festival, Gandhi World Foundation Chennai Award given in presence of Governor of Taminadu Thiru. Banwarilal Purohit**
7. **Sangeet Ratna Award 2019, Sumadhur Hamsadhwani Trust, Preerna Dham, Faridabad , Haryana**
8. **Jaipur Ratna Award 2019, Jaipur Ratna Samman Samaroh, received from Legendary Hindustani Classical Vocalist Padma Bhushan Begum Parveena Sultana , Nirmala Auditorium, Jaipur, Rajasthan**
9. **Excellence in Vocational and Instrumental Music Award 2018, Given by Rotary Club of Seven Hills, Dharwad, Karnataka**
10. **Sri Channabasaveshwar Award 2018, Given by Ulavi Padayatire Channa Basaweshwar Samiti, Karnataka**
11. **Sangeetha Sahodar Award 2018, Given by Pandit Raghunath Talegaonkar Foundation Trust and Sangeet Kala Kendra, Agra, Uttar Pradesh**
12. **Sri Yogeshwari Sangeet Ratna Puraskar 2017, Sri Yogeshwari Prathisthan, Ichalkaranji, Maharashtra**
13. **Sangeetha NadaBrahma Award 2017, Given by Gadag Ganayogi Veereshwara Punyashrama in Association with Kannada Culture Depart, Karnataka Government**
14. **Bharat Kala Ratna Puraskar 2017, International Center for Cultural Integration, Odisha**

15. **Nudisiri Award 2016**, 13th Kannada Nadu-Nudi-Culture Conference, The Annual Kannada Literary and Cultural Meet of Alva's Education Foundation, Mangalore, Karnataka
16. **Kala Vikas Puraskar 2016**, 100th Birthday of Shehnai Maestro Bharat Ratna
17. **Ustad Bismillah Khan Anniversary**, KalaVikas Parishad.
18. **Shree BabaHarivallabh Sangeet Puraskar 2015**, Receives a honor from **Satguru Uday Singhji** in Shree Baba Harivallabh Sangeet Sammelan 2015 in Jalandhar at Shri Devi Talab Mandir, Punjab
19. **Navaraspur Utsav Sangeet Sanskriti Award 2015** organised by Kannada and Culture Department Govt.given by District Commissioner of Vijapura
20. **Sundri Samrat Pt Sidaram Jadhav & Pt Chidanand Jadhav Yuva Puraskar 2015**, Solapur, Maharashtra
21. **Kala Saadhak Samman 2014**, Given by Kala Mandali, Delhi, Vividha 2014, A National Festival of Diverse Cultural Expressions of India, Delhi
22. **Asthana Vidwan Award 2013**, Given by Sri Gnana Advaita Peetam, from Sri Sathguru Swami Gnanananda Sarasvathi Ammaji, Chennai
23. **Yuva Kala Ratna Award 2010**, Given by Sripuram Narayani Peedam, Vellore, Tamilnadu
24. **Sangeeta Kala Nakshatra Award 2010**, Given Chinmaya Music Foundation, Chinmaya Mission Madurai, Tamilnadu
25. **Kala Bharathi Puraskar 2008**, Shri Kashi Vishwanath Temple, Uttar Pradesh
26. **SriKalahasti Asthana Vidwan Title 2006**, SriKalahasti Temple, Chittoor Andhra Pradesh Government
27. **Smt. Krishna Hanagal Yuvakala Puraskar 2006**, Dr.Gangubai Hangal Music Foundation, Hubli, Karnataka
28. **Sangeetha Vikas Ratna Award 2004**, from Pandit Puttaraj Gawai Music Foundation, Gadag, Karnataka
29. **Sitar Ratna Ustad Ahmed Hussain Khan Yuva Kala Puraskar 2001**, Given by Ustad Ahmed Hussain Music Circle, Chennai, Tamilnadu
30. **SurMani Award 1999**, by Sur Singar Sansad, Kal Ke Kalakar Sangeet Sammellan, Bombay, Maharashtra

Recognition :

31. Krishna Balleesh conferred **Honorary Doctorates - 2019** along with Legendary Playback Singer's Dr. SP. Balasubrahmanyam, Dr. KS. Chitra, Drummer Dr. Sivamani, Dr. Nagoor Babu (Mano) and after his father Pandit Dr. S.Balleesh in 2017.

Listing of Nationally & internationally Classical Concerts) Nationally - Classical Hindustani Performances

- ❖ Sabarang Utsav Benaras by **India Tourism Varanasi, Government of India** and Deepika Cultural Society, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh
- ❖ Government of India, Ministry of Cultures, Sangeet Sangam International Music Festival in 2021 (Senior Musicians) organised Kendra Sangeet Nataka Akademi, Delhi.
- ❖ Sawai Gandharva Bhimsen Mahostav , Pune
- ❖ Shri Baba Harivallabh Sangeet Sammelan , Jalandhar, Punjab
- ❖ Ganayogi Panchakshari Gavayi Sangeet Sammellan , Gadag
- ❖ Tansen Sangeet Samaroh , Bhopal
- ❖ Pandit Mallikarjun Mansur Sangeet Utsav , Dharwad
- ❖ Smt.Gangubai Hangal Sangeet Sammelan, Hubli
- ❖ Pandit Kumar Gandharva Sangeet Sammellan, Belgaum
- ❖ Sur Singar Sansad Sangit Sammellan, Mumbai

- ❖ Ganga Mahotsav, UP Govt., Benaras
- ❖ World wind festival , AP Govt., Visakhapatnam
- ❖ Shehnai Mahotsav , Bharat Bhavan , Bhopal
- ❖ Delhi Classical Music Festival, Sahitya Kala Parishad, Delhi
- ❖ Thyagaraja Music Festival, Thiruviyaru
- ❖ Pt. Motiram -Pt. Maniram Music festival - Ernakulam
- ❖ Spirit of Unity Concert, Tirupati
- ❖ Kashi- Vishwanath Festival - Benares
- ❖ Bengaluru International Art Festival
- ❖ Sri Krishna Sangeet Mahostav, Bhopal
- ❖ Sangoli Rayanna Utsav , Belgaum
- ❖ Kittur Rani Chennamma Utsav , Kittur
- ❖ Sri Krishna Sangit Utsavam , Chennai

Accompanied Hindustani Vocals with his Guruji Ustad Rashid Khan in concerts:

- Bombay Barkha Ritu , Ustad Rashid Khan , Banyan Tree ,
- Chennai 'Aadi Anant' Music Fest , 2015 Organised by Citi and NCPA ,
- Splendour of Masters festival, Chennai Organised by Banyan Tree,
- Jalsa - Music for the Soul', Art and Artistes , Kozhikode , Kerala ,
- Sambhrama 2016 , Ustad Rashid Khan Live in concert, Bengaluru ,
- The Hindu Nov Fest - 2016 , Chennai Naad Ninaad , Jugalbandi of Ustad Rashid Khan and Sitar Ustad Shahid Parvez Khan ,
- The Hindu Nov Fest - 2016 , Hyderabad , Naad Ninaad Jugalbandi of Ustad Rashid Khan and Sitar Ustad Shahid Parvez Khan,
- Bengaluru 'Aadi Anant' Music Fest , 2016 Organised by NCPA,
- Ustad Rashid Khan , Live in concert , Hyderabad Krishna Kriti - 2017 ,
- Dhvani Fest - 2017 , Bengaluru Kidney Foundation , 2017
- Chennaiyil Thiruvaiyaru - Season 14, Ustad Rashid Khan , Live in concert , Chennai 2018
- Ustad Rashid Khan at the Whitefield Music Festival , 2019

Shehnai in Popular music:

He has been instrumental in taking the Shehnai music to masses through interpretation of films compositions of generations of music directors like Mellisai Mannar MS Viswanathan, Maestro Ilaiyaraaja, Thenlsai Thendral Deva and Oscar Winner AR.Rahman. He has performed in classical concerts, in Jugalbandi (duets), and in film music.

Notable Jugalbandi performances :

He has played **Shehnai** alongside many senior artistes like of India Pt. Vishwa Mohan Bhatt, Ustad Shahid Parvez Khan, Pt. Ronu Majumdar, Pt. Atul Kumar Upadhyay, Ustad Rafique & Shafique Khan along with Pt.S. Ballesh and was blessed to have the accompaniment of seniors like Pt Yogesh Samsi, Pt Ravindra Yavagal, and Pt Subhankar Banerjee.

Achievements:

Early on his career - he single-handedly played shehnai in Chennai in 1997, in the presence of Ustad Bismillah Khan Sahab & his sons other eminent artists where he gave an outstanding shehnai performance in Raag Madhuwanti and received standing ovation in the concert. Unlike vocal performing solo on a word instrument like Shehnai is a really feat. He has also performed in many Jugalbandhi concerts with Hindustani & Carnatic musicians. He has sung and played shehnai for more than 1000 background-score's and 2000 film songs and around 3000 devotional songs. He has also sung Hindustani music Alaaps for films and had also collaborated Shehnai with International musicians in recording.

Popular Musical Collaborations:

Pt Balleh & Shri.KrishnaBalleh duo played Shehnai in the Hollywood movie“ TheHunderd Foot Journey -2014 ” for the track India Calling.

He also played for M.M. Keeravani for Baahubali movie He has also worked with film music directors across India .

In Kannada film music industry he has worked with Hamsalekha, Sadhu Kokila , V. Manohar , L. Vaidyanathan , Guru Kiran, Hari Krishna, Veera Samarath.

In Bollywood film music industry he has worked with KailashKher, Anu Malik, Pritham.

In Tamil film music industry he has worked with M.S. Viswanathan, Ilayaraja, Kunnakudi Vaidyanathan , Sankar Ganesh , Deva, A.R. Rahman , Vidyasagar, S. A. Rajkumar , Drums Sivamani, T.Rajendran , Devi Sri Prasad (DSP), Vijaya Antony , G.V. Prakash .

In Telugu film music industry he has worked with M. M. Keeravani ,RajKoti, Vasu Rao, Thaman, Devi Sri Prasad (DSP), Anoop Rubens & S. P. Balasubrahmanyam.

In Malayalam film music industry he has worked with ShyamJoseph (composer), S. P. Venkatesh & M. Jayachandran.

Taking the Shehnai to a global audience :

Krishna Balleh has extensively travelled in India and Abroad. His concert tours have included countries like United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, United States of America, South Africa, Germany, Switzerland, Russia, Netherlands, France, Belgium, Dubai, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Srilanka, Indonesia, Philippines and many more countries over a span of 20 years. On several occasions he has been invited or sponsored by government music festivals.

Contribution to the Society :

Preserving Classical traditions and Nurturing environment for Shastriya Hindustani Sangeet, Tansen Academy of Music

My father Pandit Dr. S. Balleh and Dr. Krishna Balleh established the "Tansen Academy of Music" School in 2011 and has been teaching Hindustani, Carnatic, screen music, devotional songs and musical instruments over 750 people in Chennai, Trichy, Coimbatore, Bangalore and around the world (online). Our school teaches classical Carnatic, Hindustani and screen music songs to autism children with disabilities and all of them are given the opportunity to perform at the annual Kanyogi Utsav. Every year our music school students organise an event called "Rus Barse" in memory of our Guru Ustad Bismillah Khan. Our school aims to spread music all over the world. At our school, people between the ages of 6 and 70 (IAS Officers, Retired Judge, Police, Lawyer, Playback Singers and Musicians) work with us to learn music wholeheartedly. Students from other parts of our school such as Trichy, Coimbatore, Madurai, Bangalore and Dharwad are also given the opportunity to sing on stage every year.

Promoting new talent :

Annual event Ras Barse Utsav is a tribute concert in honour of Shehnai Maestro Bharat Ratna UstadBismillah Khan and ShehnaiSamrat Pt Sanna Bharamanna. This event is organized every year by the academy students under the aegis of Tansen Academy and supervisory board of the BK Shehnai Foundation in Chennai. It provides a platform to bring the best musicians of Hindustani Gharanas to perform at Chennai and confers the Ustad Bismillah Khan National award to performing legends and Yuva Kala puraskar award on upcoming artistes.

The Utsav has the support of senior artistes like Awardees include

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