

## A glimpse into the glory of “Super Play-Back Singer” S.P.Balasubrahmanyam

Sripathi Panditharadhyula Balasubrahmanyam was a lad of just nineteen summers when destiny ordained that he should change course, shift from the study of engineering to playback singing. From his father Sri Sambamurthy, a famous exponent of Harikatha, he imbibed devotion to music. The boy gifted with a golden voice and amazingly sharp intellect ventured out into the volatile world of films as a singer. He learnt almost everything by himself and rose to eminence with long hours of hard work. That he belongs to the small yet distinguished band of self-trained geniuses like K.L.Saigal and Kishore Kumar is a unique facet of this many-sided celebrity.

From 1979 when he won the National Award for the first time with his superb rendering in K.Viswanath's all-time classic *Sankarabharanam*, Balasubrahmanyam cast a spell on millions of people with his golden voice, matchless diction and amazing modulation. His songs in Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, Hindi and other films earned for him a huge fan following. *Ek Duje Ke Liye* fetched him in 1981 the second National Award and four more such awards followed for his songs in other languages like Tamil and Kannada. Honours and awards rained on him including Swaralaya Kairali Yesudas Award in 2002, Sangeetha Ganga Award in 2001, lifetime achievement award and honours at home and abroad. The President of India honoured him with Padma Sri in 2001.

Music Directors like Saluri Rajeswara Rao, KV Mahadevan, M.S.Viswanathan, Ilayaraja, Lakshmikanth Pyarelal, Ramlaxman, RD Burman and AR Rehman lavished praise on what one of them aptly said “the most talented and versatile singer.” Lata Mangeshkar, P.Suseela, S.Janaki and Chitra, among the many lady singers, admire the range and richness of SPB's voice. A great moment it was when the celebrated Royal Albert Hall echoed with the voices of Yesudas and Balasubrahmanyam in June 2001. To have sung with Lata Mangeshkar in the United States was another memorable moment for SPB. A Presidential honour it was when President Bill Clinton and his wife Hillary welcomed Lata and Balu at the White House!

Thirty nine years of singing, 36,000 songs in nine languages, a world record for the highest number of songs for any individual, about thousand songs a year which means recording nearly three songs a day during the last four decades, besides acting in films, lending his voice for stars, and giving performances at home and abroad— that, in brief, is the story of this living singing legend.

His voice touches a chord in every heart — be it that of a young man celebrating an event or occasion, or a lover pining for his sweetheart or a seeker yearning for Divine Grace. The spiritual outpouring from the inner fountain of his melody rejuvenates the spirit and transports the listener into a realm of bliss thanks to the God-gifted voice of SP Balasubramanyam. By conducting programmes regularly on TV to encourage budding talent and to instill in the younger generation values of eternal relevance he is doing yeoman service to the society and the future of our children.

This is a humble presentation, a token of our admiration and esteem for Sripathi Panditharadhyula Balasubrahmanyam whose work is larger than his life and deeds bigger than words and who uses his talent, time and energy for the benefit of people all over — with a prayerful wish that he be blessed with good health and many more years of service through his extraordinary genius.

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