

## Tribute to Ainkaran – A Unique Artist from Tamil Eelam

by ILankai Tamil Sangam 09/2016

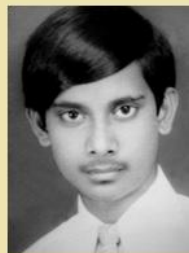
Sivaaingaran Chelvadurai, a tech-supervisor turned impressive stage singer, who performed on equal footing with renowned playback singers over three decades and who was born and raised in Tamil Eelam, emerging from a family of social activists and intellectuals, passed away at age 55 in Columbia, Tennessee, USA.

Ultimate cause of death was kidney failure resulting from treating a rare disease called *amyloidosis*. The disease produces an unusual protein that accumulates in various organs causing them to become less effective over time. It affects about 0.0003% of Americans. The disease is not curable but could have been managed without life threatening consequence if it had been identified early on, according to his supportive brother Shanmugabaskaran of Chicago. Ainkaran, as he was endearingly called, passed away on August 18, 2016, after a period of intensive care.

Ainkaran was born on June 7, 1961 in Inuvil, a village in the northern peninsula of the island Sri Lanka, which is renowned for upholding traditional, cultural and spiritual values. Ainkaran immigrated to US to in 1983, but his true calling was part for having mastered music training, particularly in carnatic music). Ainkaran gained by listening. Hard work, were the factors that enabled him performer.

Ainkaran performed on stage playback singing: S.P.Balasubramaniam, Chitra, Chimaye, Manorama, youths. He frequently partnered Krishna of New Jersey and Chicago. During a 2002 FeTNA with Aingaran remarked, "I never well." Such a talented artist has from the community at a young

Ainkaran was very methodical in was done meticulously and he was always dressed smartly. short, he spent his life lavishly, his relatives and friends, listening reliving the good old days by episodes and hilarious jokes. The photos here capture Ainkaran's growth from a teenager to motorbike loving youth to a spiritually centered artist and a family man. Ainkaran not only excelled in music, but also got involved in art and photography -- a multi-talented artist.



study metallurgical technology music. It is creditable on his without undergoing any formal music (South Indian classical competence in music purely dedication and perseverance to rise to eminence as a stage

with movie industry legends in P.Susheela, K.J.Jesudas, Jamunarani, Krish and other budding with US-based singers Anitha Rama Raghuraman of event, Chitra after performing expected Ainkaran to sing so been suddenly snatched away age.

his habits. Whatever he did, it neatly. For instance, in attire Though his life span was having fun in the company of to their favourite music and recollecting memorable

Ainkaran celebrated his 54<sup>th</sup> birthday by posting the following on social media:

“Today, my life number has increased as usual and I am stepping into my 30th year of music journey-2015 since 1985. God is great and Thanks God that I have walked through lots of barricades, politics, nonsense talks and etc., in my music path but God was with me to boost me up and helped me to pass through and God is still with me and I am surrounded by him.”

“First, I would like to Thank my parents, my wife, my kids, my brothers and their family, my sisters and their family, my true friends, my great musicians, my duet partners, my co-singers, my concert organizers, my music sponsors, my true supporters, my Facebook friends and my girl friends (JUST KIDDING).”

Ainkaran, on his website *CSainkaranmelodies.com*, reveals his deep appreciation to two people who helped him launch his music career:

“I take this opportunity to thank you all for your support, encouragement, and affection showed to me since starting in 1985. Especially, I would really like to thank for my beloved brother late Dr. C. Manogaran from bottom of my heart to help me to find the right people in Chicago area. With the help of those special people, I was able to find my great friend Dr. Xavier Roche; a radiologist and plays instruments as a hobby with his small group in early 80's. Dr. Xavier Roche helped me to promote throughout the U.S. I would like to thank him for his talented, wonderful human compassion.”

Ainkaran's late elder brother, Dr. Manogaran Chelvaduari exposed systematic colonisation of the Tamil homeland by the ethnic Sinhala dominated government through research publications, and was the author of many books on the conflict in Sri Lanka while he was a professor at University of Wisconsin, Parkside, USA. His second brother Shanmugabaskaran is a community leader and a poet himself.

Ainkaran is survived by his wife Sivagowri, his daughter Anjali (graduated 2016) and son Ashwin (high school student).

Among many concerts Ainkaran gave with various artists one memorable but yet unpublished event was held in Queens, NY in 2004 called *Uthayam* in support of Eelam



Tamils. That was 5 years ahead of the genocidal massacre of 140,000 Tamil civilians by the Sri Lankan armed forces in 2009. While the goal of the concert was solemn, the spirit of the event was high. Specially, the duets from the '60s and '70s by P. Susheelaamma and Ainkaran were not only nostalgic but fantastic. Adjoining still video frame above is a testimony to the

fun both the singers and the audience had at the event where Ainkaran effortlessly pitched for Susheelaamma in her voice whenever she missed the lyrics – dual voice being a unique talent of his.

Ainkaran held SPB sir as his guru/mentor and friend. When Sangam contacted SPB sir for this article, he promptly sent us his feeling on Ainkaran on August 31<sup>st</sup>. We reproduce his handwritten message in full:

“It is almost 12 years since I know Mr. Aingraran – Most of our communication was through emails and phone- The only topic of our conversation was Music, Film Music. He never bothered me with lengthy and unnecessary topics. He knew the value of my time.”



SPB sir continued: “In the past decade, whenever I was doing any concert in US, he was at least present in couple of venues, taking pain all the way to fly from his home city. The last time I met him in Mr. IlayaRaja’s concert (forgot the place). He was with me most of the time back stage.”

“I am guilty of two things which I could not fulfill when he asked. Could not click a picture of him with IlayaRaja on the day of the concert and could not get him some L.P. record he was asking for.

Nanbane! ENGIRUNDAALUM VAAZHGA.

with tears,

BaluSP (signed 8.31.17)”

His singing partner on most of his US tours, Anitha Krishna recollects Ainkaran’s qualities succinctly as:

“My first meeting with Ainkaran at a concert for ITS (Ilankai Tamil Sangam, NY-NJ) was organized sometime in the early 2000’s. After that, we have done several wonderful shows together all over the U.S.A, including a tour with P. Susheela Amma. Usually the



singers are not great organizers which require a lot of coordination with the musicians and the sponsors but Ankara did a great job doing both. He was very meticulous and committed and one of his greatest qualities



was that he had no ego on stage- He wanted all the singers to shine on stage and ensured that they showcased their best. I am still coming to terms on the fact that he is no more - My husband Krishna used to speak with him on a regular basis. We will really miss him. God bless his soul!”

While living in Chicago, where he started his music journey, he partnered with Rama Raguhram in 1991. She describes her family's loving relationship with Ainkaran:

"We are deeply saddened and pained by our dear friend Ainkaran's demise and send our condolences to his friends and family. He was the most gifted artist and performer, as well as a perfectionist! I feel very fortunate and blessed to have known him since 1991, when I met him at a music program for Chicago Tamil Sangam. After I had sung just one song, he came and introduced himself to me and said, "You are going to sing with me from next time." That was the beginning of my music journey with him and the loving friendship that would follow between our families. I wouldn't be here performing if it weren't for him and I am forever indebted to him.



Ainkaran had a very keen sense of humor and a kind heart. Both Raghu (Rama's husband) and him shared a deep friendship. We had such memorable family road trips together! It was always music...music... music! He had an extremely rare song collection and loved to share his music with everyone! His love for music was eternal! I feel so fortunate to have sung so many beautiful melodies with him. He taught me the nuances in singing, encouraged me and always supported me. Although we would occasionally have disagreements over song selection, it always came out beautifully (and he would never cease to mention how he was always correct!) He made sure all our stage performances were recorded and we spent many hours watching, listening and reminiscing together!

You have created a deep void in our lives Ainkaran. Your songs, beautiful memories and our friendship will keep you with us forever. God bless your family!"

As recently as 2015 Ainkaran joined the youthful super-singers Jessica Judes and Pragathi Guruprasad in US. Among the multitude of concerts Ainkaran gave in North America with many accomplished artists, the adjoining collage of photos captures the essence of his embrace. We simply could not do justice to ALL of his music partners, including the orchestra members, in this tribute. To witness some of his stage performances and his orchestra members we provide links to YouTube entries below. Sangam thanks all of the musicians for helping Ainkaran reach the heights he ultimately achieved.

We complete this tribute by pointing to a curious plight of global Tamil artists. An icon of Tamil music, Hon. late M. S. Visvanathan has never been blessed with a national (Indian) award for music direction nor an international recognition – not that he cared for, but it is a pathetic state of power politics against a class of Tamils? Is it high time for Eelam Tamils to endow an award system to recognize artists excelling in Tamil music?



	Song Title (Embedded YouTube Link)
1	<a href="#">Thenral Urangiya Pothum</a>
2	<a href="#">Madhura Nagaril Thamizh Sangam</a>
3	<a href="#">Paal vannam paruvam kandu</a>
4	<a href="#">Naalaam Naalaam Thiru Nalaam</a>
5	<a href="#">Pani Illatha Margaliya</a>
6	<a href="#">Anbumanam kanintha pinnaie</a>
7	<a href="#">Oruthi Oruvanai</a>
8	<a href="#">Kalayum Neyai (Duel Voice)</a>
9	<a href="#">Iyatkaai ennum ilaya kannee</a>
10	<a href="#">Uyire uyire vanthu enoodu kalanthu</a>
11	<a href="#">Eaai Paadal Ondru</a>
Memorial Hymn	
12	<a href="#">Jenmam Nirinathathu ஜென்மம் நிறைந்தது</a>