

Taverekere Srikantaiah (Kanti ji)

January 18, 1938 – March 31, 2022

Founder & First President of

Matya Bharati

BRINGING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER THROUGH THEATER



Formed Natya Bharati in 1984 with missions as below

- ❑ To bring the vast richness and diversity of Indian theater to theater-lovers of the Washington D.C metropolitan area, including the second-generation Indians and the community-at-large.
- ❑ To foster local talent and provide a platform for theater enthusiasts in the community to develop their interests in all aspects of theater production.

Playwright

1988 Ekalavya

Director

1988 Ekalavya

2007 Where There is a Will

Producer

1984 Kasturi Mrig

1985 Daag

1985 Kiski baat

1985 Sabse Bada Aadmi

1986 Haai Mera Dil

1987 Hayavadan

Actor

1984 Kasturi Mrig

1985 Sabse Bada Aadmi

Natya Bhapati

*Proudly presents
A 3-Act Social Satire*

IN HINDI

KASTURIMRIG
कस्तूरीमृग

*Translated from a popular Marathi Play
By P. L. Deshpande*

PRODUCED BY: T. SRIKANTAIAH
DIRECTED BY: MADHUSUDAN JOSHI

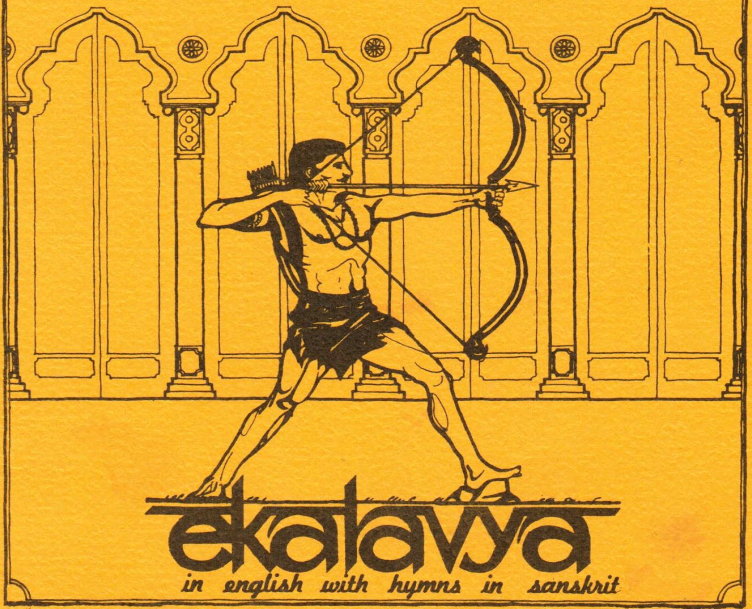
SAT. JUNE 16, 1984 - 6:00 P. M.
SUN. JUNE 17, 1984 - 4:00 P. M.

JACK MASUR AUDITORIUM
BUILDING 10
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF HEALTH
9000 ROCKVILLE PIKE
BETHESDA, MD.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
(301) 986 5451/(301) 593 8696
(202) 966 9404

First Production of Natya Bharati

Matya Bharati
proudly presents
a great story of mahabharata



THE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

FRIDAY, MARCH 18, 1988 AT 8:30 P..M.

SUNDAY, MARCH 20, 1988 AT 5:00 P..M.

PRODUCED BY: ARCHANA SURANA

DIRECTED BY: TAVEREKERE SRIKANTAIAH

Directed by Kanti ji

SAHARA

A PRESENTATION BY

in collaboration with

Natya Bharati

A Ghost. A Mistress. A Treacherous Will.
And a Tamarind Tree.

A play by Mahesh Dattani

Where There Is A

Will

Director: T. Srikantaiah
Producer: Adarsh Gupta

Dates and Time:
Friday November 30th at 8pm
Sunday December 2nd at 2pm
Saturday December 8th at 4pm

Venue:
Jewish Community Center
of Greater Washington
6125 Montrose Rd
Rockville, MD 20852

Cast: Subhojit Sen, Manoj Tiwari, Mitushi Raphael, Suma Muralidhar and Alka Khanna

Donation: \$100 and \$50 (Reserved Seating), \$15 (general seating).
Proceeds will be donated to the Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington (IFC)

For Tickets Contact-
Suma Muralidhar (301 530 5057), V.S. Raghavan (301 469 8345), Adarsh Gupta (301 299 1480)

Directed by Kanti ji

From 25th Anniversary Brochure

Natya Bharati: The Beginning

Taverekere Srikantaiah (Kanti)



**Member, Board of Trustees
(1989-Present)**

**Founding President (1984-
1989)**

Greetings to Natya Bharati supporters.

I consider it a great honor to have been associated with Natya Bharati all these years, including the formative years of 1982-1984. It was the commitment of so many individuals in those early years that gave us a strong foundation.

As theater lovers, we enjoyed plays staged in various Indian regional languages by the local regional organizations. However, there was no comparable organization to stage plays at the national level (mainly through Hindi plays to draw audiences from the entire subcontinent). Our goal was to fill this vacuum and initiate a theatre group in the Washington metropolitan area. We hoped to provide entertainment and an opportunity for cultural sharing and cultural enhancement to the members of the Indian subcontinent community as well as the American public.

Our informal discussions with members of the Indian community in such places as the World Bank/IMF, the regional associations, the Indian Embassy, the India School, Temples and the residences of the community leaders in the Washington area provided us a strong foundation on which to initiate a theater group. A committee of experts conducted a thorough research at the Library of Congress and other research institutions and gave the group an appropriate and beautiful name "Natya Bharati". With open arms, we all embraced "Natya Bharati".

Yet this was only the beginning. Our destiny was on the line as we launched our pilot project "Kasturimrig" with dedicated group of artists—from all over India—and invested eight months in preparation for the show. We received a standing ovation from the audience. The community responded and showed their support by becoming patrons in large numbers and pressing us for more plays.

The rest is history.

Today, we are a solid organization of 25 years—with 42 plays and about 120 shows—integrating the subcontinent community—cutting across regional and national boundaries. The Organization has sustained and is growing rapidly with the involvement of the next generation. Natya Bharati has evolved into a vibrant and dynamic organization with higher standards set out.

As the Founding President, I am proud to be associated with Natya Bharati from its formative years. I thank Natya Bharati patrons for their continued support.



Top: with **Rajat Kapoor** in 2014 “Nothing like Lear”

Bottom:
Receiving an award from famous director, Actor, Playwright
Mr. T.S Nagabharana from karnataka state



Eklavya & Kasturi Mrig





Kasturi Mrig









Kanti ji left us last week while we were preparing for our play “Three Sisters.” This made us very sad, but we knew that Kanti ji would want us to stand tall and keep Natya Bharati going strong!

Kanti ji had a vision to create Natya Bharati in 1984 and sustain it by uniting and supporting everyone associated with our artistic endeavors. He loved everyone connected with Natya Bharati. He would beam with selfless appreciation and pride when he saw anyone succeed and trying to contribute in any way to the organization.

He directed and acted in many plays in the early years of Natya Bharati but in the last few years he chose to support us behind the scenes. Nothing was too small a job for him, and he even loved being a gate keeper on show days. Jayashree di would help on the ticket table and very meticulously count all the money while Kanti ji would happily collect and count stubs at the door.

This time while we were getting ready for “Three Sisters”, I kept looking at the ticket table and the door and felt an inexplicable sadness. I kept hearing his voice saying, “You stay strong, your heart is in the right place, keep doing what you are doing, and I will tell you when you go wrong!”. His unwavering support sustained me during the 6 years I was president, and his words of encouragement echoed this past week when I keenly felt his absence.

I loved and respected him as my brother and mentor. There was a day when he sat me down and let me have it, and I also did not hesitate to tell him of his bad decisions. He respected that as well.

I will miss seeing him coming for play readings and other meetings with a big tray of Umpa that Jayashree di cooked for us. I will always miss him, but I know he is in a better place.

I am not the only one who loved him. I put together this booklet including all the notes and messages received in his honor from many who had worked with him over the years and cared.

With love & Respect, Adarsh Gupta



Kanti and I frequently used to run into each other at different functions hosted by different temples to celebrate Indian festivals. Quite often I was requested to prepare a children's play for the occasion which I did with immense pleasure. I believe Kanti must have been involved in the planning committee or something as he had similar interests and liked to volunteer his time for the community affairs.

In 1983 when Mangal Mandir was ready to build its own building, Kanti approached me with a request to stage a children's item at the big occasion of their Bhoomi Poojan on May 22nd, 1983. I agreed of course. I gathered some neighborhood children who were in the age group of 5-8. They dressed up as 7 gods with 7 spouses coming on the stage, one couple at a time to bless the new temple. When the couple came on the stage and stood like a statue, their Arti was played. During each Arti a middle school girl and a boy would stand on either side with thalis and do Arti for them. The audience was charged with devotion and joy to see those young children standing still with a smile on their faces during the Arti. They wondered if they were seeing children in the form of God or God himself had come down in the form of children. Kanti was very much pleased to see that item and thanked me profusely.

Some time after that I heard from Kanti again. This time he had a bigger plan in mind. He had called to talk about starting a drama group in the area and wondered about my views on the subject. I, of course was very excited and all enthused about this great idea and invited him to hold a meeting at my home in Silver Spring.

I met Dr. Madhusudan Joshi, Alka Khanna, Kalpana and Shekhar Tipnis, Lalita and Vijay Deshpande and some other people interested in drama. The meeting was very successful. The Drama group to be formed was named Natya Bharati; some of the points for the constitution were discussed.

The Indian Drama group Natya Bharati with Late Dr. Madhusudan Joshi as its first president was cheerfully welcomed by the area theatre lovers. Soon Natya Bharati staged its first play **Kastoori Mrig** in 1984. Kanti and I acted in this play. I met Jayashree later; she was pregnant with her second daughter then. After leaving NSD in Delhi, theatre returned in my life again. I felt very fortunate to meet so many talented actors in Washington area. I am thankful to Kanti for thinking of getting me involved in Natya Bharati..

Since then we worked together for many years. Every year my husband and I looked forward to attending the annual musical evening at Kanti and Jayashree's home. It ended with delicious food cooked by each member.

Kanti gave so much to the community. His services to the theatre in the area will be sorely missed. He was a very kind friend. We bid him good bye with a very heavy heart. May his soul rest in peace.

My hearty condolences to the family. On Shantih.
Shashi Kalra



This is such a huge loss , a devastating news indeed . Kanti was our friend for a very long time. Even before Natya Bharati was founded, Kanti, the late Dada Joshi and I used to meet regularly for lunch at the World Bank cafeteria and talk about theater and compare notes about Kannada and Marathi plays in DC area. He always had big ideas about expanding Natya Bharati and getting more people involved. He was such a gentle soul and tried to connect with people. It was truly an honor to have collaborated with Kanti on so many projects. We will greatly miss him. Our thoughts and prayers for Jayashree and the family. May his soul Rest In Peace.

Vijay and Lalita

Kanti ji's life needs to be celebrated because of his valuable contributions to the well being of his friends, students, family members and society in general. He will live through those contributions and continue to enrich the lives he touched.

He truly cared for people around him. He cared for the cultural aspects of life may they be on or off stage, educational aspects of life may they be in or out of classroom. I specially value the religious and spiritual aspects of life that formed the very foundation of his life and living.

We will miss Kanti ji's physical presence but his meaningful and sincere caring will continue to shine through the precious memories.

May his journey into the light be as illuminating as the very life he lived on earth.

Suresh Kodollikar

Kanti ji always wanted the best for Natya Bharati. He contributed immensely in setting Natya Bharati on a firm footing, with his leadership in the beginning. He was always welcoming to people with different regional backgrounds. This is a great loss to all of us who knew him, and respected his commitment to NB.

My sincere condolences to Jayashree, Deepa and Nanda, and other family members. May he rest in peace!

Manju Gupta



It is indeed very sad that Shrikantaiyyah (Kanti) is not amongst us anymore. Mention of Kasturimrig play brought the following to my mind. Kanti had played the role of Acharya Ramanujam and the play ends on his exit from the stage. He exits while saying the following lines from Rabindranath's Bengali poem:

*Jadi tor Daak shune keu naa aashe - If they answer
not your call,
tobe ekla chalo re - walk alone
tobe ekla chalo re - walk alone
ekla chalo, ekla chalo - walk alone
If they answer not your call, walk alone
walk alone, walk alone, walk alone....*

Kanti is now on his solitary walk. May God rest his soul.

Shekhar Tipnis

We all had seen the first play produced by Natya Bharati (Kasturi Mrug) in 1984 in which Kanti, along with Dada Joshi and Chandrashekhar Tipnis had acted. I still remember that play and also several others but Hayavadana I remember in my mind particularly, because that was staged by the students of IIMA in 1978 in which Sudhakar Keshavan had acted.

Kanti's play in which the song "Made in India" was a turning point was unique and that play was supported by some key American friends from his office in the World Bank. One of them had offered several training programs for my division in the World Bank.

Kanti's contribution is huge and he has left behind his legacy.

Chandra



Dearest Jayashree, Deepa and Nanda,

I am at a loss for words as I write this. Anupam and I were so deeply saddened to hear about Kanti passing. It is not only a huge loss for our community but also a personal loss for me.

My association with him and all of you precedes the formation of Natya Bharati. Anupam reminds me that he first met Kanti on orientation program at the Bank in 1977! He remembers fondly their regular meetings over afternoon tea in the Bank cafeteria.

I remember you and Kanti being among the first of his friends that I was introduced to when I was a new bride back in 1983. And I remember vividly coming to your apartment to visit your new baby, the beautiful Nanda. And of course it was his vision and stewardship that eventually led to the creation of what is now a premier South Asian theater group. In fact it was his distinct style of leadership and commitment to community building that has allowed it to thrive over the past four decades. He held us all together in his own warm and gentle way.

It is hard to fathom that he is no more. I know how devotedly Jayashree has taken care of him through all his health challenges and will surely feel the void most. Nanda and Deepa, please take care of yourselves and your mom as you come to terms with this irreparable loss. And please let us know if there is anything at all that we can do. Now or later.

May Kanti rest in eternal peace. Om shanti.

With love,

Alka

I have known Kanti since 1987 when he recruited Krish and me to participate in Hayavadan. We have had a long friendship packed with admiration and mutual respect. I will really miss his warm smile as he welcomed us so humbly at the door of all NB productions. A pious person, he worked hard to collect audience and funds for Sahara, NB, SSVT, Kaveri and Nadatarangini events. All his friends will vouch for his unassuming nature. Both Jayashree and his hospitality will remain with us. May his soul rest in peace. Heartfelt condolences to Jayashree, Deepa and Nanda.

Chitra Krishnamurti

I too met Kanti in 1987, when Chitra and I joined the cast of NatyaBharati's play Hayavadan. I worked with him over the years on many NB and Sahara productions in various capacities. He was always a kind leader and mentor. Later, when he taught a Project Management course at U-MD, he invited me to be guest lecturer twice. I enjoyed that experience. Kanti could work effectively with a wide variety of people, moving them all towards the common goal, without ego. He will be missed sorely by the entire community. Our heartfelt condolences to Jayashree and the children.

Kris Murti

For me and I know for a lot of people - Kanti was a mentor, friend and a well wisher. I do not know what he saw in me when he asked me to be VP for Sahara. I have fond memories of the making of and eventually performing plays like Trishanku and The Shadow of Buddha to name a few which he directed. I am what I am in the theatre field because of him. He was the one of the persons who always encouraged me once I became President of NatyaBharati. He was very forward thinking and welcomed change for better. Two months ago when we met, he shared with me that he wanted to restructure NatyaBharati and wanted me to be a part of the process. Jayashreeji, Deepa, Nanda – I am proud to be one his mentees and friend. He will truly missed.

Paresh Parekh

I came to Washington DC area in 1988 with a theater background and found Natya Bharati and Sahara. This was my first connection with Indian theater. I was so excited to be part of the group. Met Kanti ji and Jayashree there. Kanti ji was so humble that I did not know he was the founder for many years. As Kanti ji directed numerous plays, Jayashree and I spent many hours in the light and sound booth together. He was always very appreciate of my light design and all my work that I appreciated a lot. No role was too small for Kanti ji – he was the ultimate team player. If he was not directing a play, then you know he was collecting tickets at the door or ushering. This is a great loss to Indian community. He will be truly missed. Om Shanti 🙏

Mamta Kukreti



We are so sorry and shocked to hear about Kanti ji. Kanti Bhai was the pillar of Natya Bharati. He and Jayashree were the regular morning walker at Montgomery Mall and we met them there many times. He will be missed a lot. We pray that his Soul. Rest In Peace and may God give courage to the family to bear this loss. Om Shanti

Ajay and Pushpa Dashottar

Many of us wouldn't even know each other had it not been for Natya Bharati. An irreplaceable loss to us all. Hard-pressed on words to express my sorrow. Sending hugs to Jayashree Aunty and the entire family.

RIP Kanti Uncle.

Madhuri-Hari

Very sad news.

Natya Bharati has lost one of its founding members and pillars. I remember the muhurat of **Hayvadan** at his house. It was my first involvement with NB.

Ashok Ambardekar

So sorry to hear this news. I had known Kanti sir through Natya Bharati and also through the Kannada community.

He had always been so motivating and supportive of all the creative work in the DC area and pioneer for the theater world. Kanti sir will surely be missed. I will miss his presence in the audience for future plays.

We pray that his Soul Rest In Peace and he starts the theater world in heaven and for us to join him there to continue our passion for theater. Om Shanti

Rajiv and Leena Paul

Just so sad to receive this news. Kanti will be remembered fondly for his many contributions to the world of Indian theater in the DC area. May he rest in eternal peace.

Sangeeta Agrawal



Dear Adarsh, We learned the news of Shri Kantaya's passing away thru your e-mail. One is never prepared to say good-bye to life until as and when God calls us. Certainty of our presence in life has limitations. We pray we fulfill our days with hope and gratitude. His legacy will live thru inspiration among the young Indians for creative arts of NATYA BHARATI. Vinod conveys our Pranam to you.

Love—Sarla

I had the honor of working with Kanti uncle in Natya Bharati as well as in Sahara productions. He was always supportive. He showered ample praise and blessings which I will always cherish. He will be missed on planet earth but I'm sure he's already starting a heavenly Natya Bharati branch!

Meera

It's NB's darkest day. We have lost a friend, mentor, father of Hindi theater in the DMV area. I had the privilege of working with Kanti very early on with "Trishanku" and "Where There is a Will", then in the Board.

His enthusiasm and care for NB was contagious. He will be sorely missed. RIP Kanti.

Manoj Tiwairi

I am deeply shocked to hear this very sad news. Though I had not seen him for quite some time, but never had imagined that I will never be able to see him again. Please convey my condolences to Jayashree. May God give her the strength to bear this irreparable loss. Om Shanti.

Ashok Sarin

So very sad to hear this news! Kanti was a good friend and advisor. In addition to the NB connection, I also knew him through some of my academic friends at GWU and was aware of his tremendous dedication to teaching and research. I will always remember his smiling face and ever helpful disposition. Our heartfelt condolences to Jayashree and family and pray that God gives them courage to bear this huge loss. May his soul Rest in Peace! Om Shanti..

Raju and Mohana



He was such great pioneer for Natya Bharati. Very sorry to hear the news. Thanks for sharing.

Dilip Parikh

Many of us wouldn't even know each other had it not been for Natya Bharati. An irreplaceable loss to us all. Hard-pressed on words to express my sorrow. Sending hugs to Jayashree Auntie and the entire family. RIP Kanti Uncle.

Madhuri-Hari

Very sad news.

Natya Bharati has lost one of its founding members and pillars. I remember the muhurat of Hayvadan at his house. It was my first involvement with NB.

Ashok Ambardekar

Really sad to know if this, Kanti ji will be sorely missed at all NB events! **Chetna**

This is devastating. Huge loss. Prayers for the entire family. RIP, Kanthi. You will always be with us.

Pranav and Niyati.

A pillar has fallen. So sorry to hear this.

Vikram Kolluru

Really sad to hear this. Kanti ji was truly a visionary to found NB and nurture it through all these years. His contribution and passion for theatre lives on in all of us. Om Shanti.

Sri Mirajkar





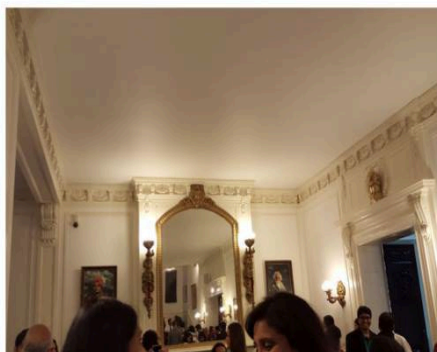
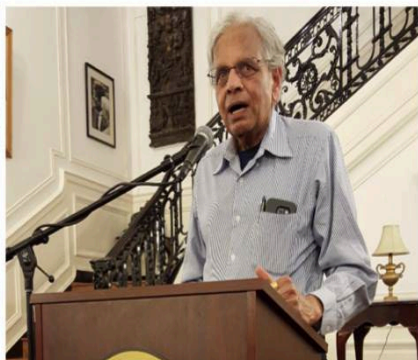
Formed “Sahara” in 1992 with the sole purpose of raising funds for needy causes through the medium of theater and other performing arts.

Plays produced by Sahara

- 1. Kamala**
- 2. Ghazal program**
- 3. An evening of Kathak and Martial Arts**
- 4. The Quest**
- 5. In The Shadow of Buddha**
- 6. On The Hill**
- 7. Trishanku**
- 8. Meera**
- 9. Where There is a Will**

Presented by Sahara

- 1. Taconic Parkway**
- 2. Kasturba vs. Gandhi**



At the Indian Embassy, play "Here We Go" presented by Natya Bharati in 2015





**KANTI
SRIKANTIAH**

YOU ARE INVITED
TO CELEBRATE THE LIFE OF
TAVEREKERE (KANTI) SRIKANTIAH
SATURDAY, APRIL 16, 2022
BAUER RECREATION CENTER
ROCKVILLE, MD
12 P.M.

PLEASE RSVP BY APRIL 12TH

Obituary

Taverekere (Kanti) Srikantaiah, beloved father and husband, thoughtful friend, accomplished academic, and community arts leader passed away at home on March 31st surrounded by family. The eldest of seven children, he was born in 1938 and raised in Tiptur, Karnataka, India. Kanti was educated first at Mysore University and obtained a graduate degree from Karnatak University Dharwad before emigrating to the United States in the Fall of 1962 to continue his studies, ultimately obtaining his Ph.D. in Information Sciences from the University of Southern California in 1973.

He began his professional career at the Library of Congress before embarking on a long and storied career at the World Bank until his retirement in 1999. At the World Bank, Kanti worked predominantly on information science at the Bank's headquarters in Washington, D.C. and in several field offices in Africa and Asia. After retiring from the World Bank, Kanti began his second career as an academic, serving as the director and senior professor at the Center for Knowledge Management at Dominican University in Illinois. He later served as a visiting professor at the University of Maryland's College of Information Studies before retiring in 2020. He was also a visiting professor at the Indian Institute of Management in Bangalore and other management universities in India. Over the course of his academic career, Kanti published numerous books and articles on knowledge management and information science. He was greatly admired and loved by his students and colleagues.

Kanti also had a passion for the dramatic arts. In 1984, he founded and was the president of Natya Bharathi, a performing arts organization focused on Hindi language plays. He also founded Sahara, a performing arts organization focused on English-language plays for the Indian-American community, with proceeds from ticket sales going to charities working on women and children's causes in India. Along with his writing partner Robert Clymire, he wrote and published an English-language play about the immigrant experience to the United States, titled Trishanku. He was involved in the Kannada community in Los Angeles, founding the very first Kannada association and creating a newsletter, Sangama, which still runs to this day. In the D.C. area he served as the president of Kaveri, a local Kannada organization. Kanti won numerous awards and was honored for his work in theater. He received the Kannada Nataka Academy award and the Karnataka Rajyothsava award in 2007.

Kanti is survived and will be deeply missed by his wife of almost 50 years, Jayashree, his two daughters, Deepa and Nanda, his son-in-law Sivram, and numerous members of his extended family and friends both in India and the United States.

Dear Board members,

Thank you for all your support during this difficult time for us. Thanks for the plant & flowers. Kanti was so proud of NatyaBharati, I often felt like it was another one of his children.

Also, thank you for the beautiful brochure honoring Kanti. I appreciate

He was happy that organization
growing in a right direction -

Take Care Everyone -

- Rupesh Jayashree Kanti