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# App launched to popularise legacy of Oothukkadu Venkata Kavi

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CHENNAI: Oothukkadu Venkata Kavi, the brilliant composer who lived in the 1700s, had no lineage of disciples, or children to carry out his legacy. It wasn't until one of his nephew's descendants Needamangalam Krishnamurthi Bhagavathar brought to light much of his compositions that Kavi's devotional poetry and prowess shone far and wide.

Now, vocalist and Chitravina artist Bhargavi Balasubramanian, is on a mission to popularise the legacy of the extraordinary composer through an app that deep dives into his work – compositions and music; poetic skills, life and historical significance. Called 'Venkatakavi,' the app was launched on July 14 as a comprehensive platform to access his compositions and music in different forms.

"I saw that people knew very less about this composer. He was born before the Trinity of Carnatic music (Tyagaraja, Muthuswami Dikshitar and Syama Sastri), but his compositions didn't become as well-known as theirs," says Bhargavi. "After my guru, Chitravina Ravikiran brought out Oothukadu Venkata Kavi's songs and widely propagated them, I put together a website dedicated to the composer in 2014. And after working on it for close to two years, I launched a comprehensive app, as most people access information on their mobile phones today."

The app works just like any music app; it has separate sections for audio and favourites, playlists and compositions that are listed like an index. The composer's website has been integrated as part of the app, as has a YouTube channel featuring various musicians performing his compositions.

"I started the YouTube channel two years ago featuring performances that were already available and some new ones. I have also directed and curated a pandemic production featuring 50 plus students and artists performing the 'Saptaratnas' (a group of seven compositions of Oothukaadu Venkata Kavi), which we are releasing as a monthly series. These can be accessed through the app too," says Bhargavi.

People who know of this composer only recall popular songs like 'Alaipayuthe', 'Aadathu Ashangadu' and 'Kuzhaloothi Manamellam'. But his depth is far more. As a scholar equally proficient in Sanskrit as Tamil, he has created operatic compositions on the Mahabharata, Bhagavatham and the puranas, that can be performed as dance operas too," says Bhargavi.

'Venkatakavi' app is available on Android and iOS.