



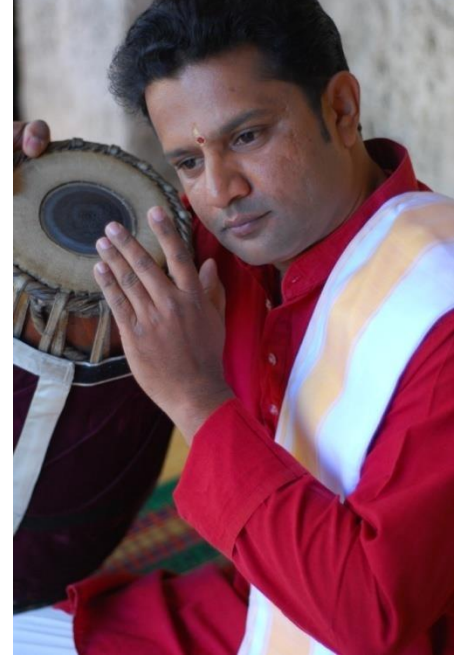
## **Mridangam Maestro Arjun Kumar**

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Bangalore Arjun Kumar is among the most respected Mridangam artistes of today. He has enthralled music lovers over the past five decades with his inimitable style, novelty, fine aesthetics and precision in creating unabated rhythm patterns through his Mridangam. Born in a family of Mridangam artistes, Arjun Kumar was initiated into the art of Mridangam playing at the young age of five by his father **Sri Arjunan**, who is one of the very senior artistes in the field of percussion and was later mentored by **Sri T. A. S. Mani** for a couple of years.



Arjun Kumar started performing from a very young age and was widely acknowledged as a **Wonder Child**. Soon, awards and laurels started making their way and Arjun Kumar's career was launched in a big way when he started accompanying world renowned artistes even at his young age.

He was awarded the **Government of India scholarship** and this opened up a great pathway of opportunities for him. He then came under the tutelage of the mridangam legend, **Padmavibhushan Sangeetha Kalanidhi Dr. Umayalpuram K. Sivaraman**. It was Sivaraman's father who gauged that the hand of the 12-year-old Kumar was perfect for the instrument and urged Sivaraman to take him on as his disciple. Kumar soon rose to great heights as **one of the most prolific artistes** in the Carnatic Music circuit and **the youngest achiever of many important milestones**.

He has been **accompanying three generations of leading musicians** and has performed in all the major organisations, sabhas, music conferences and cultural festivals of India. He has also traveled extensively to other countries like USA, UK, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Switzerland, Gulf, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Australia and New Zealand. Being a **Top Grade artiste of AIR**, Bangalore, he has played in all the prestigious programs like the National Program of Music, the South Zone Hook Up and the AIR Sangeetha Sammelan. In addition to Carnatic concerts, he has widely played jugalbandhis and also with other forms

of music across the globe. The many rave reviews in the press add to his accomplishments. Besides, he has given several lecdems and presented papers in various national and international seminars.

Kumar has been honoured with several titles and awards. To name a few,

- 'Mridanga Pungavaha' from Srimad Andavan Swamiji in 1979.
- Best Mridangam from Bangalore Gayana Samaja in 1981.
- 'Mridanga Yuva Jyothi' from Sri Ananthakrishnaswami Trust in 1985.
- 'Tanjavur Vaidyanatha Iyer Memorial Award' from The Music Academy, Chennai in 1994.
- Best Mridangam from The Indian Fine Arts Society, Chennai in 2001.
- 'Mridanga Vadya Chatura' from Anna Nagar Music Circle, Chennai in 2007.
- 'Dattapeeta Asthana Vidwan' from Sri Avadhoota Datta Peetam, Sri Ganapathi Sachchidananda Ashram, Mysore in 2017
- 'Dr. Umayalpuram K. Sivaraman Award' from the Indian Fine Arts Society, Chennai in 2019



Arjun Kumar today stands apart as one of the most high-spirited and competent musicians. Being **one of the most sought after Mridangam artistes**, he has both the natural talent and acquired skill to blend and enhance the beauty of the concert through his sensitive and sensible accompaniment. With a constant yearning for variety and innovation in his playing, he ensures that his accompaniment and tani avartanams in any given concert never become predictable and stereotypical. His intuitive skills ultimately reflect in the anticipation and decisive use of fingering techniques to present a concert as a complete aesthetic package. A **torch bearer of the 'Sivaraman Baani'**, he belongs to a limited number of left-handed percussionists.

Arjun Kumar directs and leads the well-known musical ensemble '**Swaralayasammelana**'. He has played in several commercial records released by well-reputed recording companies and has also directed many musical productions. He is also an experienced and lively tutor and has many promising disciples to his credit, some of whom are accomplished performers themselves, both in India as well as several other countries. He is the **President and Managing Trustee of 'Anubhooti'** - an organization founded by him for the promotion and propagation of Indian traditional arts and cultural heritage.