

## South Indian Carnatic Music: the Kriti

*Ninnadanela* is a Kriti written by the South Indian Composer Tyagaraja. The basic Kriti structure includes three parts: the pallavi, the anupallavi, and one or more charanams. Each of these elements consists mainly of *sangati*, musical variations of a single musical line of text. In the *pallavi*, a single line of text is subjected to variations, each of which gets more complex until a climax is reached, and the initial line is repeated. The return of the pallavi thus acts as a cadence. The *anupallavi* follows, with a new musical line that contrasts with the *pallavi*. The *anupallavi* section closes again with the *pallavi*, and then the *charanams* begin, ornamented verses (one or many) that again conclude with a final repetition of the *pallavi* melody.

Listen during the performance for *citta svara*, passages sung to solfege syllables, and *kalpana svara*, improvisation using syllables. *Ninnadanela* is based on adi tala (4+2+2) in Kannada raga, a *vakra* or crooked raga that does not ascend in a straight line. The six pitches in ascent follow this pattern: C-E-F-G-F-A-B-c, while the seven in descent follow a different pattern: c-B-c-A-G-F-E-F-E-D-C. Most of the *svara* (itches) feature *kampita*, or shakes. The instruments used in this recording are *tampura*, violin, *kanjira*, and *mrdangam*.

From *Vidwan: Songs of the Carnatic Tradition*, Nonesuch Explorer HB-72CJ3. Ramnad Krishnan: voice, V T Thyagarajan: violin, T Ranganathan: mridangam, V Nagarajan: *kanjira*, P Srinivasan.

Pallavi: *Ninnadanela Nirajaksha Shri Rama*  
Anupallavi: *Kannavari Paini Kaga Sejanala*  
Charanam: *Sadyarova Ninnan Sanu Reje Jereyo*  
*Tatwabu Teli Sinagu Tyagaraju Negi*

Translation:

Why should Tyagaraja, who knows the right method of adoring you, blame you and be angry with everybody? Events happen according to one's own Karma. The Lord dispenses his grace to people as suited to Dharma. One's spiritual attainment will be in proportion to his mental developments. The success of entertainments will be commensurate with the money spent.

Listening Guide to *Ninnadanela* (4:08):

- 00:00 the opening drone plays the sruti
- 0:08 the voice enters, “shadowed” by violin, to begin pallavi section.  
Mrdangam enters
- 0:12 the singer repeats pallavi text 7 times, adding more ornamentation every time.  
(The pallavi text is one cycle long)
- 0:43 second half of pallavi text introduced
- 1:04 the pallavi ends. the mrdangam drops out and *kanjira* is the only percussion
- 1:12 the anupallavi begins on sa, with a new text repeated 6 times
- 1:55 the pallavi returns to close the anupallavi section
- 2:08 the anupallavi concludes and the mrdangam comes back in
- 2:15 the first of two charanams begins
- 2:32 sustained note on syllable *bu*
- 2:40 another charanam
- 3:07 the last line of text with composer’s “signature”
- 3:15 the pallavi returns, signalling the end of the charanam section
- 3:38 A final drum cadence closes the kriti