



Geetha Mandalam...

have been actively performing Chenda for the past 15 years and recently completed their Arangetram for Panchavadyam as well, under the tutelage of Guru Raghu Nair.

They are a very popular feature at every auspicious Kerala Vishu (new year) & Onam (harvest) festivals, performing in temples all over Chicagoland (including Aurora, Lemont and Grace Lake). They have performed regularly all over the country as well, at the invitation of various Malayalee and Hindu organizations.

BRIEF ON GEETHAMANDALAM and INCEPTION

Since its inception in 1978, the Geetha Mandalam has played a key role in preserving culture, religion, and tradition of the Chicagoland Malayali community. That said, it has played a larger role in uniting us as a family. It is about the person who offered help when needed, a ride to a doctor's office, kinship with the buddy you grew up with, a brother or sister you never had, the only Auntie or Uncle your little one has seen, those special occasions when we shared a prayer, a meal, or a little laughter together, that bond that makes you teary-eyed when you find out someone you knew for many years is not keeping good health.

The Geetha Mandalam is all of the above, and much more to us, built upon a foundation of trust and affection that has allowed it to thrive for so many years.

(Following is gleaned from Kerala Department of Tourism & Wikipedia)

Arangetram - debut on-stage performance following years of training – leading to graduation for any art form.

Panchavadyam - an orchestra of five instruments, a classic temple art form that evolved in Kerala. Of the five instruments, four -- timila, maddalam, ilathalam and idakka -- belong to the percussion category, while the fifth one, kombu, is a wind instrument.

Prominent festivals featuring Pachavadyam performances include Thrissur Pooram (renowned as 'Madhathil Varavu'), Kaladi Panchavadyam ulsavam and Machattu Thiruvannikkavu vela

Chenda Melam – Chenda is a cylindrical wooden drum, suspended from the drummer's neck so that it hangs vertically. Though both sides can be used for playing, only one is actually beaten, using two sticks. It is mainly performed in Hindu temple festivals and as an accompaniment to various religious art forms of Kerala. The chenda is used as an accompaniment for Kathakali, Koodiyattam, Kannyar Kali, Theyyam and among many other forms of dances and rituals in Kerala.