

Erudite lectures

THIS YEAR, Sri Parthasarathy Swami Sabha, has included a series of lecture-demonstrations, in its 104th year celebrations with M. B. Sriman Narayanan as co-ordinator. The series began on December 18 with a talk on the "Role of Sanskrit in South Indian Classical Music" by Dr T. S. Sathyavati, musician, musicologist and Sanskrit scholar. The

either composed exclusively in Sanskrit or also in Sanskrit. Prominent composers of the pre-trinity era, in both categories, include Annamacharya, Purandaradasa, Narayana Tirtha and Sadasiva Brahmendra. Amongst the Trinity, Dikshitar's compositions stand out as a yardstick of excellence, as regards the Sanskrit language as well as their musical worth.

representative of sky, fifth in the five elements of nature. Amongst the heptatonic or sampoorana scales, the ancestral ragas are Sankarabharanam, Kharaharapriya, Todi, Kalyani, Harikambodhi and Natabhairavi. The six can be compared to gotras or familial groups of the Hindu system. Most of the later ragas fall in one or other of these six groups. Prof Janakiraman proceeded to admirably demonstrate, how shifts in moorchanas resulted in totally different scales.

The session concluded, with a Tiruppugazh in Sindhu Bhairavi that highlighted some of the phases of the erstwhile Gandhara grama. Dr L. Ramakrishna followed SRJ on the veena adding colour to the talk.

On Meera

Ethno-musicologist Dr S. A. K. Durga presented a paper — "Critical study on Meera and



S. R. Janakiraman

her Compositions." The talk focused on the saint-poetess of Rajasthan, compared to Andal of south India, composed songs in three languages—Rajasthani, Gujarati and Vraj-Hindi.

Dr Durga explained that Mira's devotion was in all the four bhavas — dasya, sakhya, vatsalya and madhura and her compositions reflect these emotions. She is a lyrical genius. Many Hindustani ragas are found in these compositions. Mira was influenced by the teachings of Sri Krishna Chaitanya and Vallabhacharya. The speaker sang a few bhajans of Meera and concluded, with a homage to M. S. Subbulakshmi, among the first to popularise Meera bhajans in the South.

Evolution of Nagaswaram

Multi-lingual scholar and

as mentioned in ancient literature, is Nagaswaram and not Nadaswaram though one does come across other terms like Nayanam, Nagachinnam and so on. Nagaswaram can be classified into two varieties—Timiri and Bari.

In yesteryears, Nagaswaram was predominantly played during temple worship. Mallari and Rakhti are special compositions created for the Nagaswaram, though Rakhti is not in vogue now.

This is the only instrument having twelve holes and capable of reproducing the traditional fifteen gamakas.

The speaker concluded his talk, with a plea that this traditional instrument be re-inducted in temple worship throughout South India.

LAKSHMI DEVNATH



B. M. Sundaram

Sri Parthasarathy Swami Sabha

speaker said the relationship between Sanskrit and music goes back to the Vedas for Indian music began with the Sama-veda. Since then, innumerable treatises in Sanskrit have been written on music. Sanskrit compositions in music also have a long tradition, starting from a few lines in the Natyasastra to full-length compositions like the Ashtapadis of Jayadeva, dating back to the 12th century. From then on composers have

Tyagaraja also has a sizeable number of compositions in Sanskrit and Syama Sastri a few. However, the influence of Sanskrit can be felt, even in the vernacular compositions of various composers including Arunagirinatha. But, one has to be careful in handling the Sanskrit language as even a minor change in the intonation or splitting of words, can result in a complete alteration of meaning. The speaker concluded her talk saying that, Sanskrit language is both an Uccharana Sastra- science of pronunciation as much as it is a Swasa Sastra- science of breath.

Ancestral ragas

Prof S. R. Janakiraman delivered a scholarly lecture on the ancestral ragas of South Indian music. The lecture began with an invocatory sloka, from the Sangita Ratnakara, in the penatonic scale, Gambheera Natai. This audava raga was also ancestral. The term audava, was derived from udu, star and is



T. S. Sathyavati



S. A. K. Durga