

# Adding colour to legends

In a unique tribute to Carnatic music legends, writer and researcher Lakshmi Devnath has launched a series of books for children that depict the lives of these musical greats in the form of colourful illustrations. We talk to the author to know more...



A R SUMANTH KUMAR

It isn't easy for children to form an appreciation for the classical arts. While most study it out of compulsion, few truly enjoy the learning process. In a bid to encourage children to love Carnatic music, writer and researcher Lakshmi Devnath has launched a series of books detailing the lives of several legendary Carnatic music artistes, beginning with none other than famous Carnatic singer, M S Subbulakshmi. "It is only when you are young that you develop the love for a subject," says Lakshmi, who is passionate about familiarising children with India's heritage through innovative stories and story telling methods.

In this series, Lakshmi has given readers a glimpse of the lives of legendary artistes outside the auditorium. "All the people that I have featured in this series are towering personalities. I knew that I had to do justice to their stories, and so, I divided their life into three phases - childhood, adolescence and adulthood. I researched on each of these phases to identify significant events in their lives that determined their future

success as Carnatic artistes," says Lakshmi. Proof of Lakshmi's success in covering all major events in the life of M S Subbulakshmi came in the form of praise from none other than Radha Vishwanathan, the singer's daughter and disciple.

What makes these books even more attractive is the fact that they have been brought out in the form of a picture book with pages and pages of colourful illustrations of the artiste's life. Lakshmi has also included a few rare photographs of the artiste in the book as well as a small poster for children to frame or paste on their wall.

The author has written books on a number of topics for diverse age groups. She has chronicled the life of educationist Dr (Mrs) YG Parthasarthy as well as a monograph on danseuse Anita Ratnam. She will soon be launching a detailed biography of violinist Lalgudi Jayaraman. Apart from books for adults, Lakshmi regularly contributes sto-



ries to a popular city-based children's newspaper and has written three fantasy books (Poorva - Magic Miracles and the Mystical Twelve, Poorva in the Vedic Age and Sargam) for children based on topics such as the Vedas, the Azhvans and Carnatic music. Lakshmi's next book in this series will be about G N Balasubramaniam.

The book, M S Subbulakshmi - The Queen of Melody, is available at Giri Trading Agency, Mylapore, among other retail outlets and is priced at ₹125

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