

# Melody in pictures

**BOOK** Lakshmi Devnath's 'M.S. Subbulakshmi: The Queen of Melody' will appeal to the young and old alike.

**CHARUKESI**

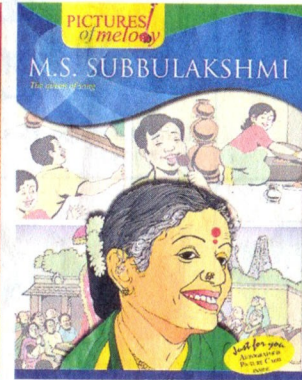
For the first time, the life of M.S. Subbulakshmi has been told in pictures. In a book titled 'M.S. Subbulakshmi: The Queen of Melody,' Lakshmi Devnath tells the story of the legendary singer from her childhood days to the blossoming of a graceful woman who spread the message of melody, har-

mony and generosity. The book is the first of a pictorial series titled 'Pictures of Melody.'

Lakshmi has culled out interesting nuggets in the life of MS from various biographies. The author's text will appeal to young and old alike. It must have been a challenge for Lakshmi to select major

events from singer's life, and tell them in about 100-odd illustrations, but it has been fascinatingly told.

The book begins with a yogi sitting in the precincts of the Madurai Meenakshi temple, who predicts that the child has been blessed by the gods. It then moves from frame to frame as the talent-



**WORTHY EFFORT:** Lakshmi Devnath and (right) the book jacket.

ed daughter of Madurai Shanmukhavadiyu grows in stature from a humble student of music to becoming an iconic figure and carving a niche for herself in the world of music.

## Memorable moments

There are many poignant moments in the book --- the harmonium-playing beggar's music which touches the young Kunja's heart, the mysterious hermit's visit offering to teach her music, the affectionate father who allows her to ride along the Rama Navami procession which he conducts and the doyens of Carnatic music hailing her voice.

Also important events in her life find a place here ---

how film director K. Subramaniam noticed the potential star in her, her quiet marriage with T. Sadasivam, her concert at the United Nations, winning the Magsaysay award, Paramacharya's blessings, being honoured with Bharat Ratna and her demise on December 11, 2004...

MS's daughter Radha Viswanathan pays handsome tribute to Sekar, the artist, for his illustrations, and Lakshmi for her script. The cover design has been done by Aras.

The book comes with an autographed copy of the legend's poster.

Priced at Rs.125, the book is distributed by Swathi Soft Solutions and is available in leading bookstores.

## Her oeuvre

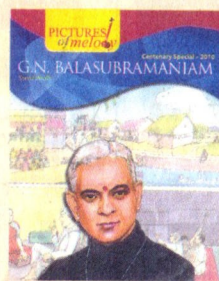
Lakshmi Devnath has used reader-friendly fonts for the text of her book, filling the narrative space with minimum words. "I want the younger generation to understand the importance of our cultural heritage and learn more about the life and times of the stars in the world of music," says Lakshmi. Her attempt in this direction, Poorva, that narrated the stories of Azhwars, proved a success, and gave her the

confidence to initiate this series on the legends of Carnatic music.

"While the books on GNB, Madurai Mani Iyer and Palakkad Mani Iyer are in the pipeline, I am also working on a series on composers including Annamacharya and Purandaradasa."

Lakshmi's book on Lalgudi Jayaraman, published by Harper Collins, will soon hit the stands.

Recently, 'Poorva in the Vedic Age' was selected in the Top-20 fantasy story



competition by Walt Disney. Besides this, 'Sargam,' a fascinating journey into the world of Carnatic music, is a project that Lakshmi is working on. (Contact: lakshmidenvnath@gmail.com)