

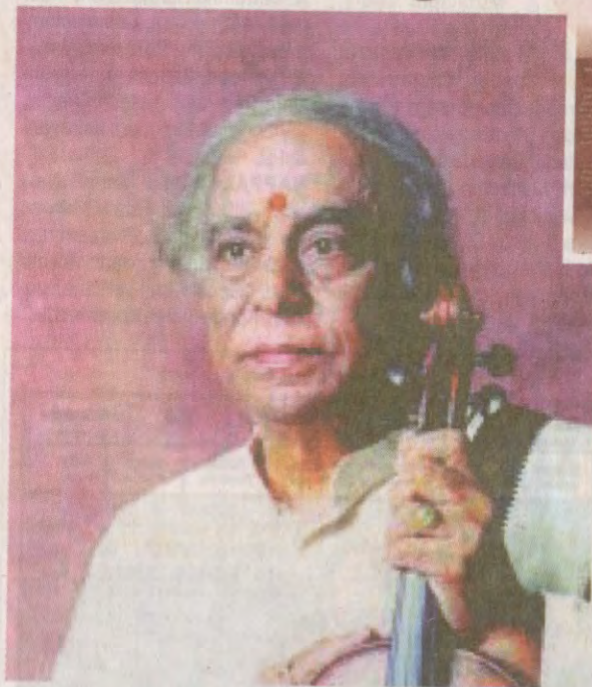
Life of Lalgudi Jayaraman chronicled

by Rajagopalan Venkataraman

Chennai: His reign over the musical arena for seven decades was the stuff of legend. His music had the unmistakable stamp of uniqueness that endeared him to aficionados. Perhaps it is fitting that the biography of the late virtuoso violinist Lalgudi Jayaraman contains a foreword by another colossus in the field of music, the late sitar maestro Pandit Ravi Shankar.

Authored by well-known researcher and writer in Carnatic music Lakshmi Devnath, *An Incurable Romantic*, as the biography is titled, charts out the musician's life in an objective and chronological manner over 25-odd chapters. Back-breaking work has gone into the making of the book that includes over 250 hours of conversations, interviews with around 125 persons associated with him and the gathering and examination of every bit of published information on the violinist — all over a span of five years.

The efforts may sound Herculean, but the tendency



of the violinist and his father to document minute details in their lives helped them in good stead, admits Jayaraman's daughter, Lalgudi Vijayalakshmi, a noted violinist herself. "My grandfather used to maintain details of my father's concerts. In addition my father's sharp

memory to recollect incidents in his lifetime too helped. I am pleased that the biography stays authentic," she adds. It commences with stories on the Jayaraman's ancestors.

The idea for the project germinated in 2008, during the 80th birthday celebra-



My grandfather used to maintain details of my father's concerts. In addition, my father's sharp recollection of incidents in his life too helped

— **Lalgudi Vijayalakshmi**,
Violinist and daughter of
Lalgudi Jayaraman

tions of Jayaraman, when all of his relatives and students had congregated. Devnath, whose daughter was learning music from Jayaraman, was requested to write the biography, which she acquiesced to. Interview sessions between Devnath and Jayaraman commenced even-

tually. The biography contains interesting vignettes about the musician, some of which include those on his childhood pranks, his initiation to music, first meeting with the music industry's doyen G N Balasubramaniam and encounters with the ace musicians Palghat Mani Iyer and Madurai Mani Iyer. Making the reading experience complete is a CD containing compositions of the violinist.

Speaking to *CE*, Lakshmi Devnath says that the biography has attempted to encapsulate virtually every month of his lifetime, beginning from the 1930s. "A tonne of information had to be examined in order to lend authenticity." This also included personal visits to places involved in Jayaraman's lifetime.

Vijayalakshmi, however, has a regret: her father's demise meant that she could not get him to read his biography. "It is sad that I could not place it in his hands," she rues.

The biography is available in hardcover and paperback editions, priced at ₹950 and ₹500 respectively.