

# A visual journey through lives of Carnatic legends

Staff Reporter

**CHENNAI:** The Ragasudha hall in Mylapore was packed for the launch of one of Lakshmi Devnath's books from her Pictures of Melody series. The series, a collection of pictorial biographies of iconic Carnatic legends, looks to popularise the age-old music tradition among the young. Maharaja Swati Tirunal, the celebrated composer and king of Travancore, is the subject of Ms. Devnath's new book. The event also saw the release of the Tamil translation of her book on M.S. Subhalakshmi, kick-starting the vernacular series.

Ms. Devnath's series, under the title of Graphically Carnatic, looks to change the perception of aged connoisseurs being the sole patrons of Carnatic music. Publishing

these books was an attempt to mobilise young children to lay claim to their own artistic heritage, she said. "Biographies are the most important link to the past. These books are not a mere narration of a list of achievements of different artistes but a retelling of their emotional journeys," she added.

The books use the visually dynamic format of the graphic novel to narrate stories. The detailed illustrations, interspersed with real photographs, make it especially attractive for young readers. While the books do not appear to be dense, their content reveals thorough research. Striking this balance was a challenge acknowledged the author. The books aim to educate, but by nurturing engaged reading by youngsters.