

'Immense, elevating and happy'

G Krishnamoorthy | ENS

THE great Thyagaraja has left behind an immense wealth of his compositions and I greatly feel that it is our duty to pay homage to him by rendering his kritis, so full of bhava and meaning. That is how the vanguard Carnatic vocalist, Sudha Ragnathan, started responding when 'expresso' wanted her to speak about Thyagaraja aradhana, Carnatic music and the role of media in promoting the sound of South Indian classical music in an e-chat.

Sudha, who visited the book stall put up the 'New Indian Express' and 'Dinamani' at Thiruvaiyaru during the 163rd aradhana of the saint-composer early this month, further said "I have been going to the aradhana without a break for the last 20 years. It is a token of my reverence for the great composer and a sign of my responsibility to further the cause of this pristine music form. I have been visiting Thiruvaiyaru year after year, in the footsteps of stalwarts such as my guru MLV Amma, GNB, Ariyakkudi and the rest".

As the aradhana does not fall on a specific date each year (but varies through the month of January), "I do find it challenging to juggle with the dates and schedules. Though the physical strain of travel and adjustments during the mighty assemblage of vidwans, vidwamsinis and rasikas throws its own challenge, the reward and fulfilment at the end of the event surpasses all the stress and strain and gives a feeling of completeness. Singing the Pancharatna Kritis synchronising with the aradhana is an elevating experience by itself," said Sudha who has an ever growing fandom.

"I am happy that the 'New Indian Express' and 'Dinamani' ensure complete coverage of the events, devote special columns and pages during the Marghazhi music season and publish fair and detailed reviews of the events and concerts. This is certainly an encouraging factor as it gives wide-spread reach and knowledge across, to the remotest parts of the State. This is how awareness and interest can grow," pointed out Sudha, a committed reader of these

popular dailies.

As for Carnatic music today, times have changed, culture and people have evolved and priorities have shifted. "If one were to pursue a career in Carnatic music, one has to be possessed with talent, be focussed and completely dedicated. Newer and newer are the rasikas who appreciate music, newer and newer are the platforms that fund artistes, performances and festivals. It all boils down to the fact how much one practises and hones one's skill to be outstanding, respected and rated high. Stability, success and standing follow naturally".

The audience are also very discerning as they are exposed to varied genres of music. It is a pleasant surprise to see more and more youngsters not only listen to music and appreciate it but also take part in workshops and lec-dems. "This is very encouraging and gives a feeling of assurance that this pristine art form of our country is in safe hands and will be handed down from generation to generation for all to listen, appreciate, enjoy and learn", summed up Sudha, a unique exemplar of her kind.



M K Ashok Kumar

