

Rajeswari Padmanabhan (1939-2008)

Vainika vidushi Rajeswari Padmanabhan was born in Kollur in 1939. She was the daughter of Lakshmi Ammal and the granddaughter of Karaikudi Subbarama Iyer (the elder of the Karaikudi Veena Brothers). From the age of five, she was under the tutelage of her grandfather Karaikudi Sambasiva Iyer (the younger of the Karaikudi Brothers) and remained under his guidance until his demise in 1958. She also learnt vocal music from Mysore Vasudevachar. She worked and taught for many years at Kalakshetra where she retired as Principal. She has composed a few varnam-s and tillana-s, and has

composed music for the dance-drama *Kumbheswarar Kuravanji*. She was among the pioneers responsible for designing the portable veena as well as a new acrylic melam. She is the recipient of many awards including the prestigious central Sangeet Natak Akademi award, and the Kalaimamani award given by the Tamil Nadu Eyal Isai Nataka Manram.

Rajeswari was so named as she was born during Sree Vidya pooja. An ardent Sree Vidya upasaka, she passed away on 15th August 2008 which happened to be the day of Varalakshmi pooja. (See also *Sruti* 51/52 and 92).

