

## Jayanti celebrations of the trinity

The Tyagaraja aradhana at Tiruvaiyaru on Bahula Panchami day which usually occurs in December/ January, is almost like a musical mela. Scores of musicians and rasikas from all over the world congregate at the bard's samadhi on the banks of the river Kaveri and pay homage to him over four days. The same cannot be said about his birthday which falls in early May. Nevertheless, Sri Thiagaraja Vidvath Samajam, Chennai organises special abhishekam and pooja on Tyagaraja's jayanti along with the rendering of the Pancharatna kritis at his samadhi in Tiruvaiyaru. Sangita Kalanidhi T.K. Govinda Rao took the initiative to organise this celebration, and vidvans used to offer akhanda ganam on that day; but that does not happen any longer, though some concerts are held on the occasion. The jayanti does not attract as much crowd as the aradhana, but devoted musicians and rasikas do assemble to pay homage to the saint composer.

Tiruvarur is the birthplace of the music trinity—Tyagaraja, Muthuswami Dikshitar, Syama Sastry—and their houses are maintained as memorials where their special days are celebrated. On Tyagaraja jayanti, the day usually begins with Bombay Jayashri and her disciples assembling to offer pooja and musical homage. This year, on 11 May, she led a congregation of about 40 students from 5 am and rendered the Pancharatna kritis, the divyanama and utsava sampradaya kritis. She was accompanied by L. Ramakrishnan (violin), Manoj Siva (mridangam), B.S. Purushotham (khanjira) and Jayalakshmi Sekhar (veena). The family members of auditor Balasubramaniam, on the



Bombay Jayashri with students and accompanists at the Tyagaraja jayanti

advice of the Kanchi Paramacharya, have also been organising similar programmes for many years. All these provide a filip to the Mummoortigal Vizha celebrating the birthdays of the Carnatic music trinity which fall fairly close to one another—Muthuswami Dikshitar on 24 March, Syama Sastry on 26 April and Tyagaraja on 4 May. Though these are the official birth dates, the occasion is celebrated on different days each year in accordance with the Tamil almanac.

The Mummoortigal Vizha was initiated by vidwan Lalgudi Jayaraman on the advice of the Paramacharya. A celebrations committee organises special pujas and musicians render the Pancharatna kritis on Tyagaraja jayanti, the Kamalamba Navavarana kritis on Muthuswami Dikshitar's, and the three swarajatis of Syama Sastry on his birthday. A series of concerts are

conducted for a few days in which well known artists perform.

Dr. Rama Kausalya, musician, musicologist, teacher and former Principal of Tiruvaiyaru Music College, through her Marabu Foundation, Tillaisthanam, has been conducting the jayanti of Syama Sastry. She has organised many workshops on the composer's creations which have been attracting participants from many parts of the country. The students assemble in Tanjavur at the temple of Bangaru Kamakshi, the ishta devata of Syama Sastry, on whom he composed numerous kritis. Apart from special pooja, the assembled guru and students render the three famous swarajatis in Todi, Bhairavi and Yadukulakambhoji ragas. A couple of concerts are also arranged in the evening.

This year, the Marabu Foundation celebrated the birth anniversary of

Syama Sastry, the oldest of the trinity, on the day of his janma nakshatram, 6 May 2019. Rama Kausalya had organised musical tributes at the residence of Syama Sastry and at the Bangaru Kamakshi Amman temple, where he served as the hereditary priest. Two young musicians from Coimbatore, Archanashree and R. Sweta, who were part of the workshop this year, rendered kritis of Syama Sastry at his residence located near the Kamakshi Amman temple in Tanjavur. The celebrations concluded in the evening with a concert by Chaitra Sairam at the Bangaru Kamakshi Amman temple. M. Balasubramaniam, Director, South Zone Cultural Centre, Tanjavur and auditor Sundar graced the occasion. The Marabu Foundation which works for the promotion of peace and harmony through traditional



Archanashree and Sweta singing at Syama Sastry's house

arts, literature and education, has been conducting many interesting workshops on music and heritage

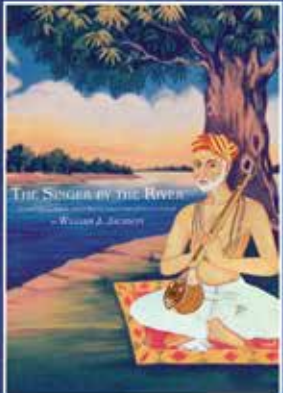
and has also been celebrating Syama Sastry's jayanti for over a decade.

V. KARPAGALAKSHMI

(L to R): Sundar, M. Balasubramaniam and Rama Kausalya

Chaitra Sairam in concert





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