

the fact is the tremendous significance of Mylapore on the concluding day of the Kapali Fine Arts youth talent festival with a flexible mind

V. Swaminathan (mridangam) exhibited competence. — NMN

Quick look into Thanjavur heritage

As an authentic representative of the ancient traditionality and layered wealth of Indian culture, the Thanjavur heritage offers fascinating material for multi-directional scrutiny. A seminar on the subject organised by the C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar Institute of Indological Research attempted to explore the different contributory streams whose confluence has resulted in its remarkable fertility of over 2000 years. Sculpture, painting, epigraphy, architecture, dance, literature and the harikatha genre of this region were surveyed by experts in the individual fields, music being the only serious omission.

As the acme of the Thanjavur heritage, the Big Temple of Brihadisvara dominated the proceedings with adumbrations on its architectural, sculptural, mural and inscriptional distinctions. Its exemplary status and splendour left little room for coverage of other areas within the time constraints of the one-day seminar.

Dr. K. V. Raman (Head of the Dept. of Archaeology, University of Madras who chaired the seminar) had a groundplan as vast as the subject itself in his lengthy keynote address on the art and architecture of the Big Temple. At the outset he stressed the need to correlate archaeology and literature as the latter could be a valuable source of information to trigger historical inquiry. He cited examples from the Sangam and post-Sangam works which helped to reconstruct the Chola past before the more accurately recorded era from 850 AD.

For the archaeologist the Big Temple offers a storehouse of socio-political, economic, commercial, religious and artistic records; and clear spelt documentary evidence of its origin (1003 AD) and subsequent development through the reigns of Chola, Nayak and Maratha rulers. Dr. Raman's description of its constructional features was loaded with informational takeoffs on other aspects, which, though interesting, could not but encroach upon subsequent speakers on related topics.

Likewise, Dr. P. Kothandaraman's (Head of the Dept. of Tamil, University of Madras) exposition on the growth of Tamil literature during the Chola period began with a historical overview of dynastic rule in chaste, non-pedantic Tamil. The age of the Imperial Cholas beginning with Rajaraja I was selected as the most fruitful period of allround efflorescence in creative, theoretical and lexical output. Eco-socio-political stability, religious tolerance and the farsighted wisdom of the age fostered the interlinked development of education, art and culture. Sanskrit learning flourish-

ed as also intellectual interchange through translations. Dr. Kothandaraman's discourse was more a comprehensive introduction to the general causes and bases of literary growth than to its nature.

Starting with the etymological origins of "Kalakshetra" Dr. Premeela Gurumurthy (Lecturer, Dept. of Music, University of Madras) traced the impact of the Marathi kirtan on the existent indigenous tradition. Some of its features were adopted to enrich the Thanjavur narrative style, pioneered by Krishna Bhagavata (1841). A demonstration of the types of verses, their metrical arrangements, tunes and rhythm cycles accompanied by the chipla and the resonant Pandarpur jalra, enhanced her specific and precise analysis.

Brevity and crispness marked Dr. Nanditha Krishna's (Director, CPRA Foundation) treatment of the Chola frescos on the walls of the narrow corridors within the vimana of the Brihadisvara temple. These exquisite examples of Chola art were long hidden under the Nayak overpainted renovations to be rediscovered in this century. While they exhibit clear traces of the earlier art of Ajanta, Pallava and Pandya techniques, they stand out for their unique expressiveness, sinuous brushwork, controlled idiom and ungarish vividness in colouring.

Singling out the Tripurantaka as the symbol of Chola military prowess, and the dancing figure as a suggestive abstraction of energetic movement, Dr. Krishna said the paintings offered valuable evidence of the domestic and religious life under Chola suzerainty.

Dr. P. Shanmugam (Professor, Dept. of Archaeology, University of Madras) and Dr. Natanakasinathan (Director, Office of the Directorate of Archaeology) expatiated on the inscriptions and the panel sculptures at the Brihadisvara temple. Mrs. Anandhi Ramachandran (Lecturer, Dept. of Dance, Kalakshetra) described the achievements of the Thanjavur quartet of Chinniah, Ponniah, Sivanandam and Vadivelu in formulating the presentational sequence of Bharatanatyam, while also composing suitable numbers for dance performance. Excerpts were demonstrated by the students of Kalakshetra. Mrs. Kannagi Mani explained the techniques adopted for the production of Thanjavur paintings today.

Some prior discussion among participants, a clearer demarcation of individual boundaries, more discipline with regard to time, and a greater use of slide illustration would make the seminars on other regions (now at the planning stage) more impactful. — G.R.

Catchy and melodious

There are three reputed women singing Tamil Christian devotionals in "Kaavalar" — Jikki, B. S. Sasirekha and Jolly Abraham, with his contribution numbers, is another asset to the cassette has music tuned by Pallavi M. Prakash. Three songs on side A are catchy and melodiously sung by the three women artists. Specimen must be made of Sasirekha's "Kavilai nilam, Jerusalem" which is delight-

In a few songs, the artist is left groping his way in the "saranams" with instrument backing him other than the section. This perhaps is why the singer off-key in a few places. The first song translated from the original "I am so glad Father in Heaven" into Tamil, but in the should the pleasing tune also undergo a

New cassette

as the song proceeds? It is the same "Near the Cross": Apart from the tune, one is forced to ask why go in for a translation when there is a well-established version in "Paamalal" hymnal number 33

Tuneful lullaby: Jikki's songs in "P Yesu" are the kind which grow on one who hears them for the second time. "Chinn vizhi" is a tuneful lullaby and like a couple more songs in the tape has a filmy feel to track is inexplicably repeated on the same at the end as a filler. On the flip side, the about the Ten Commandments is ment Pallavi M. Prakash's music is delightful has used the chorus with telling effect.

Special attention: "Kartharin Karunai" and sung by Jolly Abraham and Minni has eight new Tamil songs with Mani Lipson taking care of the music, the lyrics which were written by M. S. Seelan. The "Visuvasa Keethangal" has been given attention with the use of a variety of instruments including flute and veena, but the sound olins is sorely missed. A few songs are monotonous because of the same rhythm followed right through the song without even in the interlude. The last song "At Yesu" deals with the miracles wrought by while "Maanikka Mani Jothi" and "Paadiyae" are a cut above the rest. — S