



Dr Premeela soaked the audience in Raama Bakthi

Chennai, Dec. 6: The second day of the Divine Composers production of Chennai Fine Arts featured the composer Badrachala Ramadasa. Prof. Dr Premeela Gurumurthy, Head of the Music Department, University of Madras, gave a stunning performance that filled the atmosphere with Raama naama. She started off with a detailed narration of the story of Ramadasa, which goes thus. Gopanna (Ramadasa) was a revenue collector under the ruler Abdul Hasan Tana Shah. Ramadasa was an ardent devotee of Lord Rama and used to celebrate Sri Rama Navami in a grand manner every year. One such year, his kid accidentally fell into a pit that contained boiling rice

starch and died. Ramadasa however hid his grief and went ahead organising the festival. His kid came back to life miraculously with divine grace. Later on, Ramadasa wanted to construct a temple for Lord Rama at Badrachala. He took a part of revenue collected to build the temple with plans to replace it when he collects enough money. But unfortunately he was caught by the king and was jailed for misappropriating the funds. He underwent twelve years of rigorous imprisonment and it was during this period that he composed most of his songs pleading to Lord Rama to release him. Since his prayers went unanswered, he composed 'Nannu brovu' addressed to Sita, the consort of

Lord Rama. Then Rama and Lakshmana appeared before the king, gave him six lakhs worth of gold coins that were due from Ramadasa and asked to release him. These coins bore the impression Sri Rama Pattabhishekam on one side and Lord Hanuman on the other. When the king enquired Ramadasa about the details of the brothers who gave the money, all that Ramadasa could say was the king was fortunate to have had the divine darshan. The king realised what had happened and released Ramadasa.

Ramadasa was one of the important links between the kirtana and krti composers. Tyagaraja mentions about Ramadasa in a number of his compositions. Though

Ramadasa belonged to the sphere of kirtana composers during the period which stressed on the importance of the text of the songs rather than the tune, Dr Premeela gave a performance which included a brilliant selection of songs. She began with the famous Ananda Bhairavi number Paluke bangaramayana and did not miss out on Nannu brovu, the song addressed to Sita. Ennaganu Ramabhajana in Pantuvarali was also rendered elaborately. Shertalai Sivakumar on the Violin and the percussion accompanists Mannarkoil Balaji and Venkataramanan gave dynamic support. Overall it was a lively and the entire audience was soaked in Raama Bhakthi for two hours.