

Modern take on classical forms

Nartana Nirnaya' is a work on Indian classical music and dance written in the 16th century by Pandarika Virthala who hailed from a village in Karnataka. The book is considered as one of the primary sources for theoretical and practical knowledge of arts. The work also reflects the major changes that happened during the 16th century. With the passage of time, it acquired a progressive form and content.

Dr R Sathyanarayana, the editor of the work, was a scholar known for his systematic contributions to disciplinary bases of modern Indian musicology and danceology. The book has been translated with commentary, in three volumes, by Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA) under 'Kalamas-hastra' series.

The IGNCA had recently organised 'Shastrotsava', a two-day dance and music programme, where significant parts of the text were reconstructed and discussed. The show was inaugurated by 'Padmashri' Dr Leela Omchery, classical singer, musicologist and writer.

On the first day, an academic session was held, wherein the 'Making of the Rudra Veena of Pandarika Virthala' was discussed. The speakers of the session were Dr RS Nandakumar and

Mudhukaram Prashantha Iyengar. The dialogue between the panel of artistes and the audience centred around reconstructions and its significance. The aim was to facilitate such classical texts on Indian music and dance as useful references for all genres of performers — from teaching to learning.

S Radhika Nandakumar, one of the pioneers of the Mysore School of Bharatanatyam, said that "the performances are not based on bharatanatyam *natyashastra* but Bharata's *natya* from 'Natyashastra'. Nandakumar also performed a choreography called 'Mukha Cali' on the first day with Veena Upadhyay Nagalaxmi.

On the second day, she presented *abhinaya* — 'Svarabhinaya and Ragabhinaya' — with Nagalaxmi. A total of

eight artists from Karnataka performed at the show.

The cultural show on the evening of the first day was based on 'Sarvaraga' which was performed with the veena played in the South. The performance on the second day saw 'Rudraraga'. This was with the kind of veena played in the North.

The star feature of the reconstruction presented during the festival was 'Urdhva Gadhara Swar'. This was achieved by applying two ragas derived out of the regular mela ragas. Veena player Prashanth Iyengar said that "In order to take forward the journey, we came here. Many don't know about this kind of technical aspect of dance and music dating back to old times." Ruchira Talapatra



SONOROUS Prashanth Iyengar (top) plays the veena and vocalists (below) at the event.