

Preserve slow tempo in Carnatic music, says ISRO chairman

The Music Academy's 88th annual conference begins

Special Correspondent

CHENNAI: K. Radhakrishnan, Chairman, Indian Space Research Organisation on Monday underlined the need for protecting, preserving and promoting the *vilambitha layam* (slow tempo) for posterity.

Referring to the push for speed in everything in the world today, he said that despite T-20 cricket, Test cricket continued to be the game for connoisseurs. The same is true for Carnatic music, he averred. "[For instance] you cannot sing 'Endraikku shiva kripai' in raga Mukhari in anything other than *vilambitham* or *athi vilambitham* [very slow]," he told the audience of Sangitha Kalanidhis, Sangitha Kalacharyas and connoisseurs of music at the inauguration of the 88th Annual Conference and Concerts of The Music Academy Madras here.

Mr. Radhakrishnan, the man behind the Mars Mission, spoke about India's in-depth knowledge of astronomy and how Vageyakara Muthuswamy Dikshitar, one of the trinity of Carnatic music composers, brought out this knowledge through his *Navagraha krithis*. In this connection, he referred to the Surutti composition "Angarakam Aashrayamyaham" where Dikshitar talks of Mars as *Bhoomi Kumaram*.

Speaking about the seminal contributions of the Music Academy over nearly nine decades for the enrichment of Carnatic music's body of



ISRO chairman K. Radhakrishnan presents the Sangita Kalanidhi M.S. Subbulakshmi Award, instituted by The Hindu, to musician T.V. Gopalakrishnan at the inauguration of the 88th Annual Conference and Concerts of The Music Academy, in Chennai on Monday. Also seen are (from left) mridangam maestro Umayalpuram K. Sivaraman; N. Murali, president, The Music Academy; and vocalist Sudha Ragunathan. – PHOTO: R. RAVINDRAN

knowledge, Mr. Radhakrishnan said the Academy had elevated itself to the position of the universal academy of Carnatic music.

He also presented the Sangita Kalanidhi M.S. Subbulakshmi award, instituted by *The Hindu*, to multi-faceted musician and guru T.V. Gopalakrishnan (TVG), the Sangita Kalanidhi-designate this year.

President of the Music Academy N. Murali said the December music festival had evolved into the largest dance and music festival in the world and the Music Academy

was a pioneer of this festival. He said the translation of the Sangeetha Sampradaya Pradarshini, the Academy's major project from 2010, had been completed under the able guidance of musicologist Pappu Venugopala Rao. The fourth and final volume was released at the event.

Mr. Murali said the Academy would dedicate all its programmes on December 23 to the memory of Mandolin U. Shrinivas. The mandolin maestro's father has instituted an annual award for the best solo instrumentalist.

Mr. Gopalakrishnan, who

will preside over the seminars and concerts during the annual conference, urged the Academy to spread its wings and take Carnatic music and Indian dance across the globe. He said the classical arts and music must be taught in schools. He would be conferred the Sangita Kalanidhi award on January 1, 2015, at the annual Sadas.

The 9th edition of the dance festival will be held from January 3 to 9, 2015.

Mridangam vidwan Umayalpuram K. Sivaraman and vocalist Sudha Ragunathan were also present.