

Topic: Setting Muttusvāmi Dīkṣita kṛti-s to dance

Speaker: Viduṣī Urmila Satyanarayana

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Abstract:

This presentation commemorates the 250th birth anniversary of Muttusvāmi Dīkṣita (1775-1835), one of Carnatic music's most revered vāggēyakāra-s. After rigorous training in Varanasi under Chidambaranatha Yogi, Dīkṣita returned to South India and composed approximately 500 works that remain central to the classical repertoire. For Bharatanatyam practitioners, his compositions are invaluable—incorporating vilamba, madhyama, and druta kāla with svara patterns ideal for choreography, while his detailed sthala purāṇa-s provide complete temple narratives. This recital presents a diverse selection: Śrī mahā gaṇapatiḥ: (gaula, tisra tripuṭa) celebrates Thiruvarur's Vinayaka with madhyama kāla svara-s particularly suited for dance, featuring a subtle rāga mudra in "pādāmbujō gaura varṇa vasana dharō." ānanda naṭana prakāśam (kēdāram, janya of dhīraśaṇkarābharaṇam) from the pañca bhūta liṅga series describes Chidambaram's ākāśa liṅgam, emphasizing the jīva svara-s Ma and Ni in its concluding svarajati. nī sāṭi deivamu, a rare Telugu daru composed for his disciple Kamalam's arāṅgēṭram, depicts Tiruvarur Tyagaraja as Valmikanathar with rich abhinaya possibilities. ānandāmṛtākarṣini (amṛtavarṣini, janya of caturaṅgiṇi) immortalizes the legendary rainfall at drought-stricken Ettayapuram. The nōttusvaram rāma janārdhana exemplifies Dīkṣitar's pioneering fusion of Western scales with Sanskrit lyrics, accessible for ensemble work. ardhanāri (kumudakriya) beautifully captures Shiva-Parvati's divine union through music that seamlessly embodies this duality. sūryamūrtē (saurāṣṭra, dhruva tāla), the opening navagraha composition, provides extensive narrative material about Surya's mythology, ideal for elaborate sañcāri-s. These compositions showcase Dīkṣitar's unparalleled contribution to the Bharatanatyam repertoire.