

On the Charming Cowherd

THE REPERTOIRE

Some songs that Aruna chose to trace the birth of Krishna and enumerate his pranks included:

- 'Vishamakkaara Kannan' - Oothukkadu's hilarious song on the mischievous child.
- 'Manda Maarudam' in Bhairavi - the birth of Krishna in a tense atmosphere concerning his security.
- 'Tamadbhutam Baalakam' - A sloka from Bhagavatham, on the glowing looks of the baby.
- 'Oru Puram Nandarum' -- A viruttam in ragamalika, on the infant's secret transport across the river.
- 'Oruthi Maganai...' in Behag -- An Andal verse from Tiruppavai.
- 'Uthi Uthi Gopala' in Bhoopali -- A Marathi song featuring a chorus by the gopis to awaken the lovely infant.
- 'Thatthi Thatthi Nandanthu' in Chenjurutti -- This talks about the child that starts walking.
- 'Dekhori Dekhori' -- A cradle song in Brijbhashi, by Saint Paramanand.
- 'Maatrariyada Pasumponne' in Nadanamakriya - Yashoda's plea to the mischievous boy to stop his antics.
- 'Brindavani Venu' in Abheri -- a Marathi abhang by Bhanudasa describing the fascination with which wild and tame animals alike listen to Krishna's flute in the forest.
- 'Manamayakkum' -- A viruttam by Venkata Kavi, on the beautiful cows and calves of Gokulam.
- 'Maadu Meikkum Kanne' -- Yashoda's protests about young Krishna's forays into the forest herding the grazing cows, and the boy's humorous response.

THEMATIC Aruna Sairam invoked the Lord at Oothukadu with some beautifully worded songs.

M.V. RAMAKRISHNAN



Versatile vidushi Aruna Sairam's music has so many different dimensions that even in the endless repetition of some of the most popular songs in her rich repertoire, one often finds some unusual elements which add new colours to those familiar songs. This fact was strikingly evident in her recent Oothukkadu Temple benefit concert at The Music Academy.

Rare kritis

In recent years, Aruna has been playing a major role in popularising the compositions of Oothukkadu Venkata Kavi, which have several different dimensions. On this occasion, which coincided with the celebration of Janmashtami, she included some of his familiar as well as unfamiliar kritis on Lord Krishna -- in a delightful selection of songs tracing the birth of the beautiful infant and the pranks of the playful child to a lullaby.

The songs were further enhanced with the lively dance-

ing of young children trained by dance gurus Narasimhachari and Vasanthalakshmi, in a pleasing stage setting reminiscent of Gokulam and Brindavan, the abode of the Divine Cowboy.

The addition of the flute and the tabla was another feature that added novelty to the presentation. Excellent performances by the following accompanists enhanced the lively atmosphere: Padma Shankar (violin); J. Vaidyanathan (mridangam); Dr. Kartick (ghatam); Sruti Sagar (flute); Kiran (tabla) and Hariharan (tambura).

A cheque for Rs. 10 lakhs was presented by the organisers of the benefit concert, SS International Live, to representatives of the Oothukkadu Temple. This reminded one of the way the legendary M.S. Subbulakshmi had raised funds for the Ramakrishna Math. Also present that evening was Dr. Kris Yogam from the U.S., who made a substantial donation of Rs. 10 lakhs to the temple fund.