



N. RAJAM

Fellowship of Sangeet Natak Akademi

Born on 16 March 1939 in Ernakulam in Kerala, Shrimati N. Rajam received her initial training in music from her father A. Narayana Iyer. She was later a student of Musiri Subramania Iyer, the well-known vocalist and lakshana-vidwan. Thus groomed in the best traditions of Carnatic music, Shrimati Rajam fell under the spell of Hindustani music as she moved to Varanasi in 1959, to take her Master's in Sanskrit at the Benaras Hindu University. Her mentor in Hindustani music was Omkarnath Thakur of the Gwalior gharana. At Varanasi, Shrimati Rajam also studied the Thumri tradition of that city under Mahadev Prasad Mishra. She moved into instrumental music gradually during this phase, finally attaining distinction as a violinist in Hindustani music.

Shrimati Rajam is an exceptionally accomplished musician and has received wide acclaim for her performances since the 1960s. Her speciality lies in rendering the *gayaki ang* on the violin, for which she has developed a precise bowing and fingering technique. Her style with its supple strength is yet steeped in emotion, which remains the source of her lasting appeal to her audience. She has proved to be adept at every form of Hindustani music, be it the majestic alap of Dhrupad, or the lyrical Khayal, the Thumri, the Bhajan, or the vivacious Nattasangeet and Tappa. Shrimati Rajam is also a teacher of repute, and has served on the music faculty of Benaras Hindu University for four decades, retiring as Dean of its Faculty of Performing Arts in 1997. She has conducted workshops on music at reputed institutions including the National Centre for the Performing Arts, Mumbai, and the ITC Sangeet Research Academy, Kolkata. She has served as Chairperson of the Uttar Pradesh Sangeet Natak Akademi. At present, Shrimati Rajam is senior faculty at the Gangubai Hangal Gurukul established by the Government of Karnataka at Hubli.

For her outstanding work as a performer and teacher, Shrimati Rajam has been honoured by various institutions. These distinctions include the Uttar Pradesh Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (1978), the Padma Shri (1984), the Malaviya Award (1986) conferred by the Benaras Hindu University, the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (1990), the Padma Bhushan (2004), the Kalidas Samman (2009) bestowed by the Government of Madhya Pradesh, and the Chowdiah Award (2009) conferred by the Government of Karnataka.

Shrimati N. Rajam is elected Fellow of Sangeet Natak Akademi for her contribution to Indian music.