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A performance to remember and cherish

MADRAS, July 28.

Early this month, more than 10,000 people directly witnessed the triumph of 17-year-old West German Boris Becker in establishing a new record at Wimbledon, but hardly a few citizens were present at the time of the commencement of an equally challenging task by a lad of the same age in Madras on Friday.

Ravi Kiran, who at 10 had mastered the difficult Carnatic musical instrument gottuvadyam, decided to play on it continuously for 24 hours and started the feat at 7 a.m. on Friday. At the conclusion, creating a record in the field of instrumental music, he remained the same sober youth, least concerned about the distinction he had achieved.

Thanksgiving: It was not done in any competitive spirit, but as a sort of thanksgiving to the Almighty who had given him fame even while very young.

As he ended this remarkable event at the Padmanabhaswami temple in Adyar, about 25 persons were present. While Becker went home with a big prize, Ravi Kiran had the supreme joy of being adorned with the garland that was earlier used to decorate the deity, Padmanabha, whom he has been worshipping for years. His father was poorer by a few rupees spent on sundries.

Ravi Kiran began his exercise in the hall adjoining the temple, after praying for the success of his endeavour. The songs, ragas and swaras gushed forth from the instrument without break.

No repetition: Those who were able to note down the songs rendered, said there was no repetition. One or two ragas had to be re-played out of necessity. The tempo of rendering was sustained throughout with no sagging.

Throughout the 24 hours, Ravi Kiran hardly took three cups of milk and did not get up for a recess. Even at 1 a.m. there was no weariness in him and the songs continued to pour.

At dawn on Saturday, he showed the same freshness and enthusiasm. At 7 a.m., he played the Mangalam and straight went to the deity.

Tour of European countries: Ravi Kiran will participate in the Festival of India in France in September, then tour European countries and Canada and later play in the Festival of India in the U.S. in March 1986. Because of his professional commitments, Ravi Kiran has taken up the correspondence course for a degree in commerce.

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Non-stop gottuvadyam for 24 hours

MADRAS, July 29. — Former musical child prodigy Ravi Kiran accomplished the amazing feat of performing 24 hours non-stop on the gottuvadyam at the Anantapadmanabha Temple in suburban Adyar during the week-end. Fulfilling a vow he had undertaken, 17-year-old Ravi Kiran began his epic recital at 7 a.m. on Friday last and rendered 138 kirtanas in about 130 ragas, without any break, sustaining himself on three half cups of milk till 7 a.m. on Saturday. Even at the age of two, he had proved himself a phenomenon, being able to identify and list the names of more than 150 ragas. At five, he began giving vocal concerts, which he continued till he took up the hard-to-play gottuvadyam in 1979. — PTI.

Memorable music

By Vivaadhi

A truly memorable Gottu Vadhyam recital was to be heard at Shanmukhananda on Sunday when young Ravi Kiran proved that sheer genius has no age requirements and that musical maturity can be inborn and does not have to be acquired through any lengthy process of assimilation and experience. His music had all the desirable features such as technical mastery over the instrument, perfect sruthi adherence, very high level of laya competence, unrivalled manodharma and musical judgement that was finely honed. All this made for music that would continue to stir the imagination of the rasika long after the concert was over.

His raga alapanas and krithi renderings in Hamsadwani (Vaatanapi Ganapathim), Reethigowlai (Pari-paalayamam), Dhanyasi (Meenalo-chana), Hamsanadi (Paahijagath-janani) and Kambody (Ragam, Thanam and Pallavi) were all of the very best vintage. The music was so moving that the applause was rather muted. He did not take the audience by storm but led them through a contemplative, placid and yet emotion laden musical path. Kamalakarrao provided dignified and complementary percussion support on the mridangam and played a fine thani.

Saying "Thanks" with music

Madras, July 29 (UNI): A 17-year-old youth of Madras has created a unique record by playing the "Gottuvadyam", (a Carnatic musical instrument resembling the veena) non-stop for 24 hours.

Ravi Kiran, who had astounded connoisseurs of Carnatic music with his mastery of the rare instrument even as a child, performed the remarkable feat on Friday at the Padmanabhaswami Temple in Adyar in the city, as a thanksgiving to the deity for blessing him with the gift.

He began the saga at 7 a.m. on Friday at the hall adjoining the temple and ragas, swaras and songs flowed non-stop with ease from his instrument. Sadly, there were hardly 30 people, including his father and a few friends, present.

Perhaps, lack of publicity could be the reason. But his father Mr. N. Narasimhan, himself a gottuvadyam artiste attached to the AIR, said that the performance was neither intended to attract people nor was it a publicity gimmick.

Ravi, who was achieved fame and recognition at such young age, will participate in the Festival of India in France in September and in the US in March in 1986. Before performing in the US, he will tour Europe

♦ The first birds chirped in their nests, the sun rose gently over the city of Madras and 18-year-old Ravi Kiran placed himself before the gottuvadyam—a large veena-like instrument—at the Padmanabhaswami Temple in Adyar. The next day, as the city again yawned and stretched itself to life, Ravi was still there—playing on, possessed by some divine inspiration. During the magical 24 hours, as hundreds of people found themselves drawn to the temple, Ravi did not get up even once, eating and drink-



Ravi playing the gottuvadyam: record-breaking devotion

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ing nothing except three sips of milk. "I did not do this as a challenge or to create a record. It was done purely as a rendition to God and out of an inner call," said Ravi who already has a doctorate in music and will participate in the Festival of India in France in September. Ravi has always been a wonder kid: at two, he could identify all the 72 ragas in Carnatic music; at five, he gave his first public performance as a vocalist and at eight, he picked up the gottuvadyam, one of the few people alive who know how to play the ancient instrument.