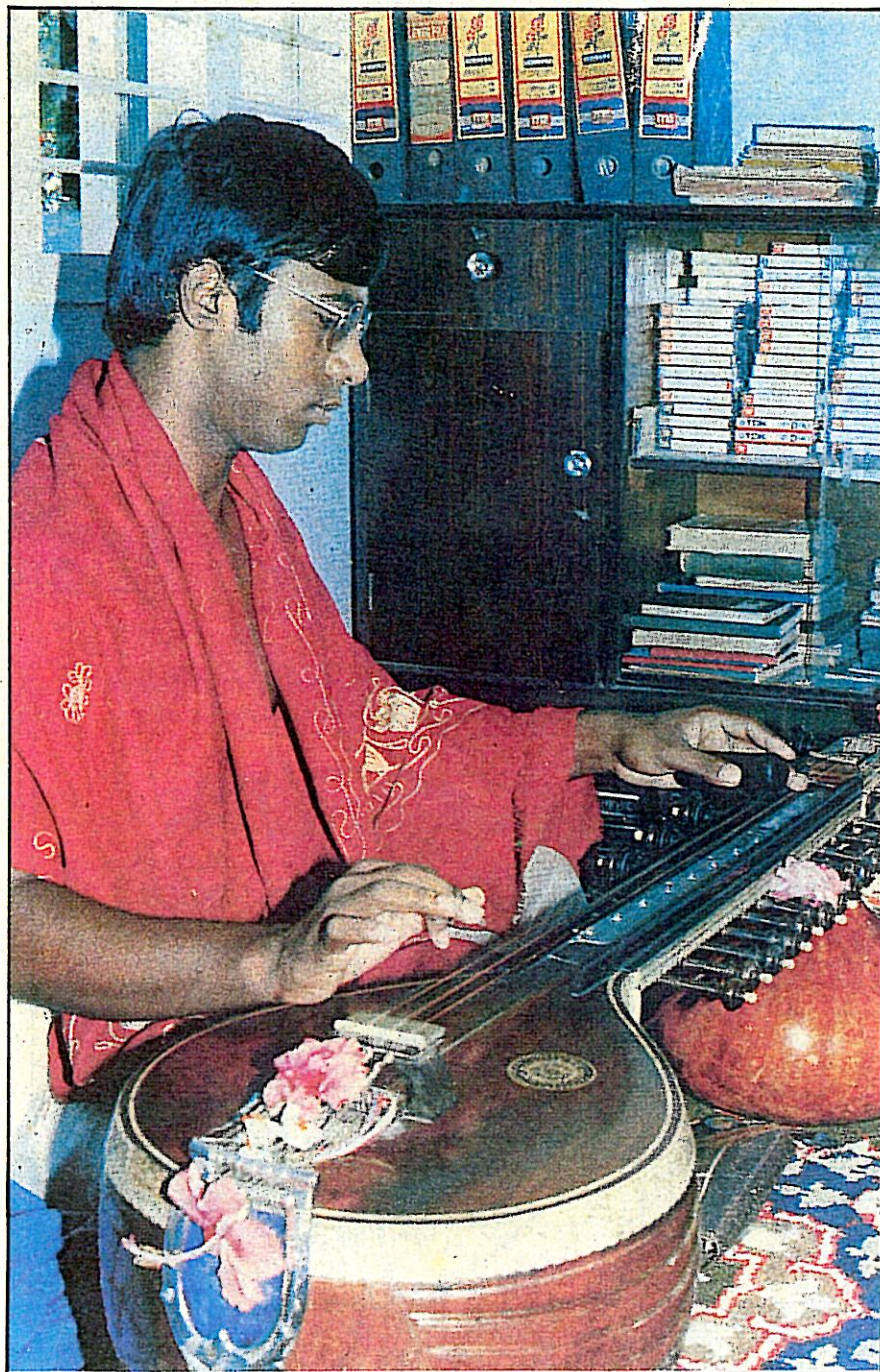


THE PRODIGY

Many believe Ravi Kiran is a reincarnation of his grandfather, a music maestro in the Mysore Maharaja's court.



GOTTUVADYAM N. Narasimhan is convinced that his son Ravi Kiran is the reincarnation of his father Gottuvadyam Narayana Iyengar. As an infant, Ravi Kiran would tap his feet to musical scores. One day the 18-month-old, sitting on his mother's lap, turned to the radio and said 'Saranga': it was indeed 'Saranga' raga that was being played.

By the time he was two Ravi Kiran became a sensation in the Carnatic music world; he could identify the raga and tala of any Carnatic song. He would even tell the number of *matras* comprising a tala. He amazed veteran musicians. Music was literally child's play for Ravi, identifying various ragas and talas.

The prodigy is 21 now. A complete musician, exuding peace, tranquillity and a quiet confidence. Narasimhan has given his all to nurture this genius, if only to propitiate his own father.

Gottuvadyam Narayana Iyengar, an *asthana vidwan* at the court of Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV of Mysore, is said to have died with a deep dissatisfaction with his musical attainment. He had been honoured and adored by the cognoscenti. Narayana Iyengar had played at Sarojini Naidu's house in the presence of Mahatma Gandhi who was immensely moved. His gottuvadyam recital at a viceregal party was so captivating that Lord Willington is said to have cancelled his other engagements and stayed on to listen with rapt attention.

He took ill before the start of a concert at All India Radio and revealed to his wife that he was dissatisfied with the performance. He wished there were 48 hours in a day so he could practise more and attain greater heights in music. He then collapsed and died. Certain belief has it that when an individual dies with a strong unsatisfied desire, his soul will take rebirth.

Ravi Kiran showed his latent talent in his third year. In his solar return chart, the *lagna* is exactly on the seventh of the birth chart. This is said to indicate an eventful third year. Astrologically the seventh angle represents the grandfather. In other words, the grandfather will show himself in his grandson in that year. In the third year Ravi Kiran had a repertoire of about 60 *varnas*, 35 *alankaras* and a number of *kritis* and knew very clearly the rhythmical patterns and combinations and technical