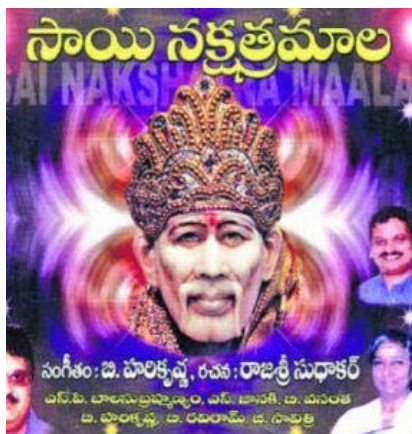


Musical tribute



An album on devotional songs on Shirdi Sai Baba.

The origin of this audiocassette production lies in the US. All the songs were first scored and set in instrumental music by B. Harikrishna, its music director, in his studio in the USA. Then he came with the musical tracks to Chennai and completed the work by adding voices of S.P. Balasubrahmanyam, S. Janaki and B. Vasantha. He wrote the lyrics and also rendered a few songs. The other voice was that of Ravi Raam. The entire effort is underscored by the single element of devotion to Shirdi Sai Baba. There are altogether eight songs in the album and the quality of recording is laudable. The word *Anna Baba* features often in this album. The origin of this word lies in Chennai, where a temple was constructed by one Kumar Baba on the Poonamallee bypass road and this most revered place came to be known as Anna Baba temple, purely because scores of people are fed daily with *annam* (food) by the temple authorities in the name of Sai Baba. In fact this cassette is available both in Tamil and Telugu. The Telugu one has just hit the market. No wonder the content of the songs in general touch the different episodes in the life of Sai Baba, narrating some magical occurrences in his life. Some of them are spiritual, but the general import in all the songs is the Bhakti element establishing the general point that Shirdi Sai Baba is the source of inspiration, help and salvation. He is symbolised as the ultimate saint of peace, a man who provides solutions to all the problems his devotees face. All the eight songs in this audio are rendered more or less the same way in *bhajan* format. The lyrics are simple with a bit of prosaic touch. But the *piece de resistance* of the entire volume is the song rendered by S.P. Balasubrahmanyam. It is the title song and well written too. The gist of it is that it is easy to chant this lyrical *Nakshatra maala* to render their path of salvation easier. It also refers to some episodes of Baba's life. The song compares the rose garden in Shirdi, which Baba had grown and named as *Emdee Vanamu* to *Brundavanam*. Harikrishna's rendition comes next with pallavi *Annababa Sai Baba* and narrates an episode of how Baba relieved one Chandu Patil from his agony. Janaki's voice sounds a bit strained and yet she never loses expression, which can be felt in the song *Ahamanu Maatanu*. The lyrics tell that us Sai Baba taught people to overcome their ego (Aham). She also rendered one more song *Maarchinaave*, which refers to the way Baba used miraculous ways to cure people of cholera prevalent at that time. Another playback singer B. Vasantha too blends her voice with Harikrishna in a song that describes greatness 'the ashes in the never extinguished'— *Dhuni*, a fireplace, being visited daily by all the devotees of Baba who visit Shirdi. There is another voice, that of G. Savitri who joins Harikrishna in rendering a song that preaches communal harmony. G.S.