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Crazy dimensions

MALATHI RANGARAJAN

With the release of 'Kannan Anubhuti,' 'Crazy' Mohan reveals yet another facet - that of a poet.

PHOTO: K.V. SRINIVASAN



BOOK TALK: At the launch (from left) R. Ravi, Va.Ve.Su, Thiruppur Krishnan, Crazy Mohan and Su. Ravi.

The ever-energetic 'Crazy' Mohan's latest calling - poetry - could come as a surprise to many. On December 11, Bharatiar's birthday, his collection of 100 Tamil poems (101 to be exact) in Venba mode - 'Kannan Anubhuti'-- was released at the Sri Parthasarathy Swami Temple, Triplicane. "My interest in Tamil literature dates back to my college days. My vocation as a humorist has overshadowed this pursuit, that's all," begins Mohan, who has written nearly 2,000 verses in the past two years! "As of now 100 have found their way into print," he adds.

Command of the language has aided his staying power in theatre, he avers - command that comes from long years of poring over religious texts and various genres of Tamil literature including poetry! "Otherwise a play like 'Chocolate Krishna' cannot be such a sustained success," feels Mohan.

You know him as a playwright and dialogue writer for films. You even know him as a painter, whose aesthetic portraits are a visual treat. But there are more facets to the man. "Seetha Ravi of Kalki insisted that I write the Q&A column in the weekly. I'm just filing the matter for the 141 (+s) (+t) edition. My friend, K. Ravi, suggested I send at least 10 of my Venba verses to a magazine. I did and Thiruppur Krishnan promptly published them in Amudha Surabhi. The encouragement has been a booster," he says. Vanavil Pannpaatu Maiyyam (Ph: 2436 1141) has taken another 90 of his verses on the Lord, and has published them as 'Kannan Anubhuti.'

Verbal downpour

Conversing with Crazy Mohan keeps you alert, chiefly because his mind works at a greater speed than his tongue. A little distraction and you could

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miss out on quite a few witty observations, puns, metaphors and synecdoches that flow out in a cascade. "As and when thoughts occur, I store them on my mobile. I use it more like the palm leaf of yore," quips this 'cell guru.'

Such capacity for prolific word play must have had a stemming point. "It began with my association with Su Ravi. We were classmates in engineering college. He was the one who initiated me into Tamil literature and has been a friend and guide in every sense." Evenings were spent in literary discussions when Ravi introduced Mohan to the unique epithets and allegories of Kambar and the inimitable couplets of Tiruvalluvar, among others. "So much so that we never found the time for the usual pranks, romantic escapades and foibles generally associated with youth," he recalls.

'Sindhanai Kottam' was a literary forum in Triplicane, which boasted of an imposing membership comprising Su Ravi, K. Ravi (husband of popular DD newsreader Shobana Ravi), Va. Ve. Su., Ramanan and many others. "They were a group of serious writers and poets. I was the only humorist," smiles Mohan. He was a regular at their weekly meets and slowly their penchant for literature rubbed off on him.

Again it was Su Ravi who taught him the grammar and rules of the four-line Venba format. "I write other forms of poetry too." His verses have won accolades from many a literary quarter -- Vaali, Jayakanthan and Vairamuthu to name a few. "Ilaiyaraja appreciated the 40 Venba verses I wrote on Ramana Maharishi," he says.

"I strongly feel it is all ordained. You can't plan your career. But you have to plan your retirement period. Developing a taste for literature and pursuing it avidly is one of them. It keeps enhancing your knowledge, fills your later days with enthusiasm and makes each passing moment worthwhile. Probably the pastime could one day become another profession all over again. But for that you have to zero in on the hobby early in life." Profound words from the humorist!

Mohan envisages a mega project in the future. "I intend working on the 'Bhagavatham,' to be penned on the lines of Vaali's 'Avatara Purushan.' I believe in the Supreme, he should help me out," is his devout stand.

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