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## PERFORMING PASTS

### Reinventing the Arts in Modern South India

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#### CONTENTS

Preface

List of Illustrations

#### Introduction

INDIRA VISWANATHAN PETERSON and DAVESH SONEJI

#### PART I: CANONS AND CANONIZATION

1. **Embracing the Canonical**

Identity, Tradition, and Modernity in  
Karnatak Music

LAKSHMI SUBRAMANIAN

2. **Inscribing Practice**

Reconfigurations and Textualizations of  
Devadasi Repertoire in Nineteenth and  
Early-twentieth Century South India

HARI KRISHNAN

3. **Standardize, Classicize, and Nationalize**

The Scientific Work of the Music  
Academy of Madras, 1930–52

MATTHEW ALLEN

#### PART II: THE LOCAL AND THE GLOBAL: REGIONAL AND NATIONAL PASTS

4. **Temple Stage as Historical Allegory  
in Bharatanatyam**

Rukmini Devi as Dancer-historian

AVANTHI MEDURI

5. **Serving Two Masters?**

Bharatanatyam and Tamil Cultural Production

JANET O'SHEA

#### PART III: VIEWS FROM WITHIN: SELF-CONSCIOUS REFLECTIONS ON TRADITION

6. **Marabu, the Inherent Flexibility of  
the Karnatak Tradition**

The Example of Bharatanatyam

SASKIA KERSENBOOM

7. **In Search of the Guru**

Technology and Authenticity in  
Karnatak Music

AMANDA JANE WEIDMAN

8. **Rewriting Cultural History  
through the Novel**

Music and Dance as Tamil Tradition in  
Kalaimani's *Tillana Mohanambal*

INDIRA VISWANATHAN PETERSON

#### PART IV: IDENTITY, COMMUNITY, RESISTANCE: IMAGINING ALTERNATIVES TO TRADITION

9. **Memory and the Recovery of Identity**

Living Histories and the *Kalavantulu* of  
Coastal Andhra Pradesh

DAVESH SONEJI

10. **One Kirttanai, Three Songs**

ZOE C. SHERINIAN

List of Indian Names and Terms

List of Contributors

**Indira Viswanathan Peterson** (ed.) is David B. Truman Professor of Asian Studies, and Chair of the Asian Studies Programme, Mount Holyoke College, USA. She specializes in Sanskrit and Tamil literature, Hinduism, south Indian cultural history, and south Indian music.

**Davesh Soneji** (ed.) is Assistant Professor of South Indian Religions at McGill University, Montreal, Canada. His research and teaching focuses on gender and performance in Tamil and Telugu-speaking south India.

This volume is a path-breaking collection of unpublished essays that critically interrogates colonialism and nationalism in the context of the 'invention' of south India's performing arts in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The essays deal with the tension between modernity and tradition that is produced in the context of metropolitan discourse. From the nineteenth-century textualization of court dance repertoire to twentieth-century Dalit Christian renderings of a Karnatak *kirttanai*, each essay critically examines the making and contestation of cultural categories in relation to the performing arts at specific socio-historical conjunctures. The essays demonstrate that inventions of tradition in south Indian music and dance are effected by continuous negotiations among agents of diverse caste, class, and gender affiliations with varying degrees of power and authority. The variety of interpretive approaches — textual, historical, anthropological — employed in the essays facilitates fruitful dialogue among them. The volume highlights the need for critical, multidisciplinary histories of the performing arts in south Asia. The introduction to this volume offers a concise and critical historical overview of south Indian classical music and dance that will be useful to uninitiated reader as well as to scholarly audiences who are interested in Bharatanatyam, Karnatak music, and the major south Indian classical forms.

Readership: This book will interest scholars, teachers, researchers, and students of modern Indian history, particularly those concerned with dance, music, and cultural history of south India. It will also interest sociologists, anthropologists, and gender historians.

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