

# Raja Ramanna and his Mysore connection

## An old school friend recalls her association with scientist and fellow music lover

By K. SHIVAKUMAR

Mysore, Sept 25: When a great man passed away in Mumbai on Friday, Mysore shed a few silent tears. This was where physicist and musician Raja Ramanna began his education, where he learnt to play his favourite instrument - the piano - and where many of his friends and well-wishers lived.

And so, even in mourning, students of Dalvoy School take pride in the fact that many decades before, Ramanna sauntered and scampered through the same building as a lower primary student.

Ramanna has paid rich tributes to the school. He admitted that the School and its teachers laid the foundation for his future.

In fact, Manjunath, vice-president of Dalvoy School, had felicitated Ramanna for his achievement in 1953. "More than 75 lead-



A file photo of Ramanna with the distinguished veena maestro V. Doreswamy Iyengar and the doyen of Carnatic music Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer. (Centre) Sister John Doraichetty with the piano used by Ramanna at Good Shepherd convent. (Right) The Dalvoy School. — Express photo by M.A. Sriram

ing personalities in Mysore had joined to felicitate him," he said.

Ramanna had then recalled the valuable guidance of Y.S.Venkataramiah, Nanjundiah and other teachers during his younger days.

In return, the school authorities are contemplating ways to immortalise the man.

"We have convened a meeting to decide on nam-

ing a hall, library or a new block after Ramanna."

Dalvoy School principal Chandre Gowda and former secretary of Institute of Engineers, Lakshman, say Ramanna had brought laurels to the school and would continue to be the guiding force for students.

There are others who remember Ramanna fondly. Sister John Doraichetty was Ramanna's childhood friend who learnt to play

the piano along with him.

"It's a personal loss," she says as she recalls the polite gentleman that Ramanna was.

"Though I was not in touch with Raja Ramanna from 1942 to 1973, I wrote congratulating him after he won an award for his research.

"I and my family were thrilled to receive his letter saying the felicitated Raja Ramanna was the

same old boy who learnt piano at the Good Shepherd Convent."

He had also played the piano at Mysore Palace and had participated in a music festival organised by JSS Sangeetha Sabha and herself.

Sr Doraichetty says that whenever Ramanna was in the City, he would visit the school to practise.

She shows Ramanna's book *The Structure of*

*Music in Raga Western Systems*, a gift from the man himself in appreciation of her skills - she specialises in playing Carnatic music on the piano.

Veteran journalist Krishna Vattam recalls Raja Ramanna's Mysore connections and how he would visit the band house to play the piano.

Also, as Defence Secretary, he was in favour of the Defence Food Research

Laboratory showcasing its work to the public.

Recalling his association with Raja Ramanna, Former Vice-Chancellor of Mysore University G.Madaiah, said the scientist had instituted a gold medal after 'Balamani' in the department of economics.

"He visited the University later and made up for the deficit in the month for the award."