

## **MEDIA PRODUCTION REVIEW**

***Chavarayachan: A Musical Album in Malayalam Inspired by Blessed Chavara***, Production: Dr Anto Amarnad CMI for St. Paul's Province, Bhopal; Composition: Dr Anto Amarnad; Price: Rs. 100.

*Chavarayachan* is an innovative musical venture of Anto Amarnad CMI. This 13-track album, like several of his previous albums, has Christian worship in focus, but with a difference. The album comprises of tracks whose lyrics are inspired by the mystical experiences, teachings, prayers, and admirable activities of Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara. Hence, this album is presented as a musical tribute to this Saint of the universal Church.

The album that is dedicated to Chavara consists of various musical genres like Carnatic, Hindustani, and Western pop music. The melodious and soothing blend of the Eastern and Western styles is often noteworthy in some of the tracks. The album is evident enough to make the listeners aware of the musical lengths Father Amarnad goes to in presenting this melange of music. The musical expertise that ensues from nearly forty years of experience in the life of Father Anto Amarnad, enriched by musical compositions and productions in Malayalam, Hindi, and English for worship, is evident in the lyrics, composition and orchestration of the tracks made available in the album.

The lyrics of the tracks are by Anto Amarnad CMI and James M. L. CMI, who are accomplished lyricists; in this project, they have joined forces with Joshy Kannoorkadan CMI, who is a young and promising lyricist and composer himself. The music composition of the entire album is done by Father Amarnad. The tracks are mixed and mastered in a fairly impeccable manner. The orchestration is done by Cilistone Stephen, a rising star in the music industry in South India.

This latest instalment of the ongoing Amarnad series paints a pretty comprehensive picture of the modern South Indian praise world. Amarnad presents an array of popular male and female vocalists whose distinctive voices are familiar to the contemporary

listeners of South Indian Christian devotional music. Several of them are cine artistes who have carved out a place for themselves in the industry. Practically no stone is left unturned as vocalists including Madhu, Kester, Franco, Mithila, Merin, and Elizabeth have rendered their warm and enchanting voices making their own artistic stamp on modern worship, in turn, rendering the album certainly a memorable one.

Listen intently to the lyrics and, in all likelihood, one will get lost in the songs' awakening power. The well thought out lyrics melodiously brought out in rich soothing voice carried to your ears by the essential orchestration masterfully mixed encourage listeners to let themselves go into an attitude of surrendering to God, calling them to live a life of freedom as children of the heavenly Father, declaring his greatness, his relevance, and radical love. Thematically, however, it is the variety of the tracks that engages us. *Some of them* explore the challenges of life, showing how God's grace consistently delivers us from the depths of despair; while some others take you on the wigs of nostalgic memories, there are a few others that involve in praise of the graces received through Chavara. Indeed, it must also be stated that all the tracks are inspired either by the literary contributions of Saint Chavara or his life and activities.

Inasmuch as I admire several features of the album, I am inclined to point out a few downsides without which it would have a better reception. First of all, Amarnad goes for a recast of three of his oldies (tracks 5, 6, 9); he should have left them in their original albums, albeit they are beautiful pieces. Secondly, there are two tracks by a female vocalist (3, 10) re-rendered by two male vocalists (4, 8). Finally, some of the lyrical compositions seem to give more exaggerated importance to Chavara, than that is due to a saint (2). However, in spite of these insignificant flaws, *Chavarayachan*, the presentation of the musical production by Anto Amarnad is a feast to the ears and a smoothening spiritual experience to your heart. I wish all the listeners of the album sheer joy of musical experience and blessings of the Father through the intercession of Saint Chavara.

**Benny Paul Thettayil CMI**