

YOU

ENTERTAINMENT

A SISTER ACT WITH MUSIC

BY KAVYA CHRISTOPHER

NOTE WORTHY

This is not just another girl-band trying to make it big in the world of pop music. Stri Taal Tarang is an all-women percussion ensemble, which will launch its first ever audio cassette album — *Rainbow* — on July 28. The members in this ensemble are between the ages of 20 and 40, and it's evident that each of the seven members in the team are completely dedicated to their music. *Rainbow* is directed by Sukanya Ramgopal, a disciple of Grammy Award Winner and member of John Macquillin's Shakthi group, T.H. Vikku Vinayakaram.

One of the very few woman ghatam players, Sukanya says, "I learnt to play the violin when I was very young. I would often peep into my guru's house, where he taught the mridangam and ghatam. I was very keen on playing the mridangam, in fact, I used to often produce music by beating the vessels in my house. My classes began the very minute I gathered enough courage to ask my guru to teach me. The ghatam came later. My guru was initially apprehensive about teaching me, as no woman had played the ghatam before," recalls Sukanya, who is now an internationally acclaimed musician. Luckily for Sukanya, her guru's father encouraged her and convinced his



FINE NOTES: Sukanya Ramgopal, director of Rainbow, an all-women audio cassette percussion album

son to teach her. The other members of Stri Taal Tarang include. Bhagyalakshmi M. Krishna on morching, Latha Ramachar on the kanjira, M.K. Vasavi on konnakol, Jayashree Mahesh on the veena, Geetha Gopal on the flute and Durga, (also a member of the Western band Cryptic), on the drums.

Most of the members come from musical backgrounds, where either their parents or siblings have been well-known musicians. In spite of other commitments such as family and studies, each of them makes it a point to practice for at least four hours a day.

Talking about their first album, *Rainbow*, Sukanya explains, "bringing out this album has been a dream. We have called it *Rainbow*, because there are seven of us in the group and there are seven basic notes in music. And probably, also because even the rainbow has seven colours." The group recorded the cassette in May." T.H. Vikku Vinayakaram will receive the first cassette on July 28 at the Bangalore Gayana Samaja Auditorium. The chief guest for the evening is Dr M. Suryaprasad. Sangeetha Kalarathna Bangalore K. Venkatram will also preside. Stri Taal Tarang will then perform a few pieces from the new album. This will be followed by an instrumental music concert by M. Nagaraj and M. Manjunath, along with T.H. Vikku Vinayakaram on the special ghatam and Sukanya Ramgopal on the ghatam support.