Multimedia Sanskrit classic

first talked about the project way back in 1990. Three years later when they met in Mumbai they decided to go ahead with the unique project.

The multimedia presentation includes the traditions of classical Hindustani and Carnatic music, congregational singing of the poem in Rādha-Kalyanam style, and devotional singing in the Guruvayoor temple. The dance styles include Bharatnatyam, Mohiniattam, Odissi, Manipuri and Kathak. "The idea is to rekindle the interest in our sacred texts. Once you develop a taste for it, the poem grows on you, and you identify with its spiritual and erotic vibrations," says Mr Makkuni, who has also developed a highly-acclaimed exhibit of Tibetan Thangka paintings. He built and led the multimedia design laboratory for *Gita Govinda.*

But how does one communicate the agony and ecstasy of love via the medium of cold heartless technology? "The idea is to blend the great Indian tradition with great technology tradition. Because the literary texts have seven types of ambiguities, the multimedia experience enriches the complexity of the poem," says Dr Vatsayan, a renowned scholar who has spent an entire lifetime on this immortal text.

The epic poem's tone and theme alternates between the sensuous and spiritual, terrestrial, human and divine, imminent and transcendent: It merges the sacred and the profane in an exalted celebration of love: "*When he quickens all things/To create bliss in the world/His soft black sinuous lotus limbs/Begin the festival of love/And beautiful cowherds wildly wind him in their bodies. Friend in spring of youth Hari (Krishna) plays. Like erotic mood incarnate.*" This technology opens up vast possibilities for preserving and disseminating the endangered art forms. Says Dr N. Seshagiri, "Why should we be dependent on government for funds. Projects like this come from conviction. It's a labour of love for those who care for our heritage. If we can convince them, a large number of corporate houses can support such innovations."