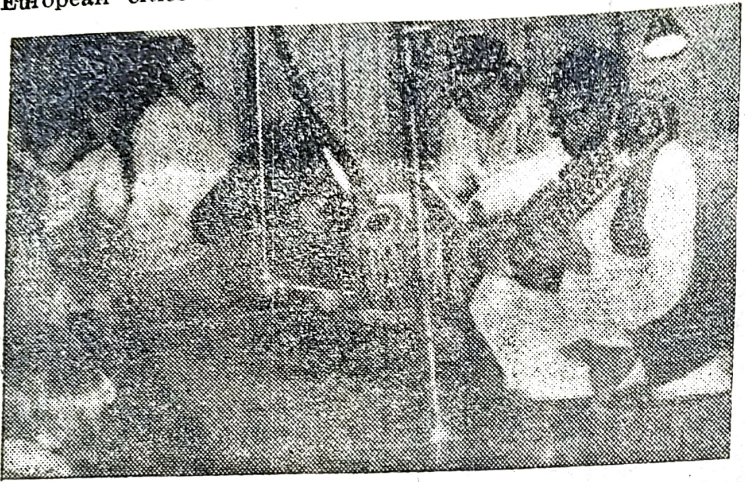




Giriraj — Raga Rage

Pandit Giriraj is one of the few virtuosos of the "gayaki" school of sitar music in India. He recently completed a two-and-a-half month tour of European cities in mid-Nov-

Pandit Giriraj principally covered four European countries during his tour — West Germany, Holland, Belgium, and Switzerland. Most of his programmes were planned and presented by Mahendra Kapadia, a young restaurateur settled in the West German



Pandit Giriraj at one of his recitals in Dusseldorf

ember. This tour followed close on the heels of another extensive West German tour of his in early 1974.

Giriraj's winter musical itinerary mostly covered West German cities. The first sitarist from India to present European audiences with music of the "gayaki" style, Giriraj impressed every congregation of listeners he played to. Moreover, "he enjoys the prefix 'Pandit', and for Occidental listeners, 'Pandit' symbolises a Master, the apex of the pyramid comprising classical Indian music. More and more Westerners are getting increasingly involved in listening to, and studying, Indian musical forms. 'They knew one 'Pandit' alone, Ravi Shanker, who got them fascinated in the intricacies of the sitar — only one, that is, till Pandit Giriraj made the scene. The reaction he elicited from the already-quite-sitar-conscious audiences in Europe showed how much of an impact he has made on the citadels of the waltz and the sonata," an admirer of Giriraj's said.

city of Dusseldorf. Mahendra plays the table very well — he is a disciple of the revered Pandit Shantaprasad. Consequently, Pandit Giriraj had ample tabla accompaniment from Mahendra, throughout his tour. The Kapadias (the wife, Manju, is also a pretty good sitarist) run the Maharaja Restaurant in central Dusseldorf, which provides deliciously spicy Indian cuisine — both vegetarian and non-vegetarian.

Pandit Giriraj covered seven West German cities — Dusseldorf, Duisburg, Cologne, Essen, Hamburg, Fulda, and Wuerzburg, as well as Vegeningen and Amsterdam in Holland, Brussels and Gent in Belgium (he played over Radio Belgium too), and Zurich in Switzerland.

All of which went to prove that Pandit Giriraj was one of India's most successful Ambassadors of Music in 1974. And he aims to be that for many more years.

CHAITANYA KALBAG.