

Recalling D.K. Pattammal's legacy

DKP 100' is an initiative conceived by vocalist Nithyasree Mahadevan to commemorate the birth centenary of her illustrious grandmother, the iconic D.K. Pattammal. Programmes have been planned for the entire duration of this centenary year and have had very good responses from the present crop of musicians and rasikas. According to Nithyasree, over fifty such have come together for this venture.

A three-day festival was conducted by DKP 100 in conjunction with Hamsadhvani at the Youth Hostel premises in Indira Nagar from 26 to 28 January 2019. This festival was named *Eppadi Padinaro* highlighting D.K. Pattammal's promotion of Tamil songs in her concerts.

Day 1 commenced with an introduction of the festival by R. Sundar of Hamsadhvani. He reminisced about the inauguration of Hamsadhvani in 1990 when D.K. Pattammal lit the kuthuvilakku to give an auspicious start to Hamsadhvani's artistic journey. He spoke about the encouragement DKP gave his father R. Ramachandran, the founder of Hamsadhvani. His speech

T.M. Krishna (vocal) with Praveen Kumar (mridangam), R. Hemalatha (violin) and S. Karthick (ghatam)



Nithyasree Mahadevan honouring Bharati Bhaskar

was followed by a short account of DKP 100 by Nithyasree, followed by a vocal concert by T.M. Krishna who sang the Tamil songs popularised by Pattammal, with great poise and discipline. It was a magnificent tribute to the legend. The presentation included such gems as *Sivakama sundari* in Mukhari, *Aru marundoru* in Kambhoji, *Poonkuyil koovum* in Misra Kapi, and *Santi nilava vendum*.

The second day's programme began with a professionally compiled audio visual presentation of Pattammal's life and musical career with voice-

over by Nithyasree Mahadevan. It commenced with her birth in humble circumstances and her father's initial tutelage in teaching her Sanskrit slokas even at the age of three which she was able to render to perfection to the astonishment of her father. Probably that was the first glimpse he had of her God-given talent and potential. It was a comprehensive presentation covering almost all aspects of Pattammal's music, from her early reluctantly produced gramophone records to her voracious desire to learn from a variety of gurus. Mentioned were her special love for Muthuswami Dikshitar's compositions, her meeting with Ambi Dikshitar, learning a couple of songs from him, and her tutelage under T.L. Venkatarama Iyer, an authority on Dikshitar. Then followed many gurus who were instrumental in building her repertoire of music. The show offered some delightful clippings of a playful Pattammal in the journey tracing the blossoming of a legend.

This was followed by a 40-minute talk by Bharati Bhaskar, who paid her tribute to the "Mangayarkarasi" Pattammal. Her erudition and scholarly delivery were impressive. She also related some anecdotes relating to Pattammal, and described the wonderful relationship she shared with her guru T.L. Venkatarama Iyer. When Bharati Bhaskar narrated DKP's last meeting with TLV, she left many a moist eye in the audience. Another noteworthy point made during her talk was regarding personal integrity and truthfulness.



Radhika Shurajit and her students with R. Sundar (Hamsadhvani) and other dignitaries

Her constant advice was never to hurt anyone.

The talk was followed by a dance presentation by Radhika Shurajit's students. Radhika had collected popular film songs of Pattammal and choreographed them to

Bharatanatyam. It was an excellent idea to play the songs in DKP's original voice. Choreographing film songs of not more than three to five minutes duration, for a dance style as elaborate as Bharatanatyam was truly a commendable effort. Radhika's students rose to the occasion and

performed with zeal. Their lovely costumes enhanced the visual pleasure of the event.

The last day concluded with a concert by Gayathri Venkataraghavan in which she presented Tamil songs popularised by D.K. Pattammal. The excellent concert was a fitting finale to the celebrations. It included songs like *Varanamukha* in Hamsadhvani, *Ayyane nadanam* in Saveri and *Teerada vilayattu pillai*, to name a few. Thus ended a memorable three-day event which provided an opportunity for rasikas to enjoy the legacy of one of the greatest artists in Carnatic music.

Gayathri Venkataraghavan (vocal) with Neyveli Narayanan (mridangam), Sunil Kumar (khanjira) and Charumathi Raghuraman (violin)



BHAVANI RAVINDRAN
(A connoisseur of music and dance)