

Enjoyable instrumental fare at the Academy

S. Sivaramakrishnan

The Music Academy had allocated two slots for violin concerts (A. Kanyakumari, Lalgudi G.J.R. Krishnan and Vijayalakshmi), three for veena (Jayanthi Kumaresh, N. Ananthanarayanan, Ramana Balachandran) and one for flute (J.B. Sruthi Sagar) in the instrumental music category.

Violin vidushi **A. Kanyakumari** began the recital with *Mahaganapatim bhavaye*, a unique kriti in Natanarayani on Lord Vinayaka by Dikshitar, which is not commonly heard in concerts these days. In *Saraseeruhanapriye* (Nata) -- the noted composition on the Goddess of learning, brilliant swaraprastara was rendered at *Saraswati* -- the celebrated charana sahitya. *Chakkani raja* (Kharaharapriya), the main kriti of the concert, was led through a 'rajamargam' after a fitting alapana and tanam. Swaras were rendered for *Kantikisundara*. Nishant Chandran (violin) followed closely, K.V. Prasad (mridangam) and Bhagyalakshmi M. Krishna (morsing) -- perhaps the only lady artist playing the instrument -- fared well with a compact tani. The concert concluded with the ever popular *Bhagyada Lakshmi*. *Hechariga ra ra* (Yadukulakambhoji), *Sreepatey* (Nagaswaravali) and *Kripaya palaya saurey* (Charukesi) were the other kritis featured in the concert.

Celebrated violin duo **Lalgudi G.J.R. Krishnan and Vijayalakshmi** accompanied by Anantha R. Krishnan (mridangam) and Suresh Vaidyanathan (ghatam) opened their concert with *Bagayanaiya* in Chandrajyoti. Next was a brief, succinct alapana of Natakurinji (by Vijayalakshmi) for *Mamava sada varade*, a Swati Tirunal



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composition, with a compact set of swaras at the pallavi. The Dikshitar masterpiece, *Meenakshi mey mudam dehi* -- main suite of the recital -- was ushered in with an expansive delineation of Poorvikalyani by Krishnan. The siblings took turns to present niraval brimming with sahitya bhava, at *Madhurapurinilaye* followed by laya-laden sumptuous swaraprastara laced with occasional poruttams, characteristic of the Lalgudi bani. The kuraippu segment

culminated in a precise, grand take-off at arai-idam. Tani by Anantha and Suresh, that traversed various nadais, was marked by clarity to end in an imaginative mohra covering just three tala cycles.

Arunagirinathar's *Seersirakkumeni* in ragamalika set to khanda Triputa, was full of substance, vyavaharam and saukhyam. A bright tillana in Kalyanavasantam composed by their father and guru Lalgudi Jayaraman, brought the recital -- rich in nuances and demonstrative of the scope of the instrument -- to a grand finish.

The grand swarajati of Syama Sastry in Yadukulakambhoji (*Kamakshi*) that demands absolute internalisation of the chittaswaras and sahitya, was given a prominent place by **Jayanthi Kumaresh** in her veena concert. The beauty of the charanas that land smoothly at the pallavi with an eduppu at samam for misra Chapu tala, was rendered sensitively.

It was with *Siddhivinayakam* in Chamaram (Shanmukhapriya) with



a beautiful alapana, that the vainika opened the concert with utmost sahitya fidelity; the pallavi with an excellent korvai to crown. It was nice to hear kalpanaswaras at samam eduppu for *Siddhivinayakam* instead of at *Prasiddha gananayakam* – usually done as if obligatory! *Guruleka etuvanti* (Gaurimanohari) as the main piece had a rich alapana that explored the raga vividly, and the kriti in khanda Chapu was rendered superbly with swarakalpana. *Ninujepakarana* (Mandari) with a brief raga outline and a few rounds of brisk swaras preceded Gaurimanohari, in fine contrast.

Jayanthi Kumaresh’s concert was indicative of her extraordinary capacity to employ excellent playing technique and a well articulated presentation. K.U. Jayachandra Rao (mridangam) and Trichy S. Krishnaswamy (ghatam) provided percussion accompaniment with care on aesthetics and absolute grip on laya.

J.B. Sruthi Sagar gave an excellent flute recital, accompanied by K.P. Nandini (violin) and R. Akshay Ram (mridangam). Dikshitar’s *Sreekrishnam bhaja* (Todi) with a brief outline of the raga and niraval and swara at *Pankajasanadi devavinutam* was the opening number. *Ezhiludai Hamsanadam*, a lakshana kriti by Tanjavur Sankara Iyer in raga Hamsanadam, came in breezily with a sketch of the raga and was full of aesthetics. Musicians, especially vocalists, could include this in concerts so that rasikas can enjoy the full import of the sahitya as it is a lakshana kriti. Many may be hearing this composition for the first time.

The main item of the recital was Tyagaraja’s *Raghupatey Rama rakshasabheema* in Sahana with a beautiful, expansive and expressive alapana rich in niceties. Swaraprastara in two speeds with a tidy korvai was presented at the pallavi. K.P. Nandini



accompanied well on the violin that matched the mood of the concert. Percussion accompaniment by Akshay Ram was unobtrusive and his tani brought out the salient features of Roopaka tala. The concert concluded with the popular bhajan *Thumak chalat Ramachandra* of poet-saint Tulsidas in Misra Khamaj.

N. Ananthanarayanan presented a fine veena concert with selection of ragas of varying hues. A brisk *Sarasa samadana* (Kapinarayani) followed *Tulasidalamulache* (Mayamalavagaula), the opening kriti. Varali was given a good delineation for *Mamava Meenakshi* (one of Dikshitar’s masterpieces) with niraval and swara at the time-tested passage *Syamey sankari*.

Sarojadalanetri, the celebrated composition of Syama Sastry in Sankarabharanam, was rendered with a raga alapana marked with immense raga bhava and poise. The element



of sahitya bhava was perceptible in the rendering of the kriti in the right kalapramanam. Swaraprastara at the charana passage (*Samagana vinodini*) had a variety of sancharas and crowned with a matching korvai for the take off at samam. Mridangist Akshay Ananthapadmanabhan provided able percussion support and the well-designed tani was enjoyable. *Govardhana giridhara* in Darbari Kanada offered rich contrast. *Mathiyay vithaganai* (Surati) brought the presentation to a fine finish.

Ramana Balachandran’s outstanding veena concert included just two kritis of Tyagaraja: *Lekana ninujootu* (Asaveri) and *Merusamana* (Mayamalavagaula), and of course the namavali, *Arunachala Siva* as a conclusion.

A leisurely delineation of Asaveri was an exquisite experience. Many may have been listening to such an exhaustive alapana of this scale, for the first time. The sober, meditative start of the raga progressed to sancharas in varied tempos that highlighted Ramana’s command over playing technique and handling gamakas. Rendering of *Lekana* was supported vocally by the young musician himself -- a true ‘vainika-gayaka’ -- presumably with the intention of sharing the full import of the composition with its multiple charanas. Swaraprastara was well presented with subtle poruttams in select rounds.

There was an elaborate alapana of Mayamalavagaula followed by tanam, for *Merusamana* as the kriti. Swaraprastara at the charana passage *Galamuna sobhillu*, laced with khanda nadai prayogas, had misra phrases in the final round of korvai. Young Kishore Ramesh provided excellent mridangam accompaniment with confident strokes and decibel discipline. The tani that traversed a variety of khanda nadai had a masterly mohra and korvai to crown. ■