

Captivating colours in Madrasana's Tinge fest

Madrasana *Tinge*, a five-concert, colour-based festival, was held from 27 to 31 October 2021 in association with IIT Madras Music Club. Each artist was given a colour for interpretation, based on which several unique pieces were presented. Storyteller and painter Vinay Varanasi composed a pallavi exclusively for each concert, roping in various technical details into the few lines of the pallavi. Every concert began with an explanation of each piece and why they were selected, amongst other compositions available.

One of the highlights of this festival was that it did have a live audience, except autotrophs. Being a carbon-neutral event, this is the first time in India that plants have been an audience to a concert. The plants were often showcased in the concert, with the recording being taken from near or behind them.

Apart from the flawless audio, Madrasana has once again excelled in the visual aspect of the concert. Large white drapes hung from the top, lit up by the respective colours, were showcased in each presentation. The dramatic lighting intensified the focus on the colours allotted to the artists.

RED – FOR COMPASSION

Adithya Narayanan, Vittal Rangan (violin) and R. Akshay Ram (mridangam) did a wonderful job of starting the series. Various interpretations for the colour red were taken—love, compassion, shakti and more.

The concert began with a viruttam, followed by *Sree Guruguhamoortey* composed by Muthuswami Dikshitar in the raga Udayaravichandrika. In



various texts, the primordial guru has been referred to in red, white, and reddish white. This reference is beautifully evident in the wordplay of the colours of the raga's name (Udayaravi meaning rising sun, and Chandrika, meaning moon).

A Kalyani piece, *Japakusuma* composed by Vinay Varanasi and tuned by Adithya Narayanan, brought about a stark change in the spirit of the concert. Beginning with an alapana, this song spoke about the red flowers in Indra's garden used to adorn the Goddess Kamakshi.

This composition was followed by an elaborate ragam-tanam-pallavi in Sahana. The lyrics of the pallavi

were based on Adi Sankara's *Saundarya Lahari*. Set in misra Triputa tala, the lyrics followed the

The tuning of *Japakusuma* took one solid zoom session for about three hours, fine-tuning for the next two days. Creating the song started when we were looking for a composition about a red flower. We tried to look into the works of Kalidasa and others, searching for any text about 'red' in descriptions of flora and fauna in the Himalayas and so on. But since we could not find any, we composed a song for the concert. Kalyani felt like a good raga to tune in because it gave a stark change after the Udayaravichandrika.

—ADITHYA NARAYANAN

Adithya Narayanan, Vittal Rangan and R. Akshay Ram



pattern of the gopuchcha yati. The vocalist's stellar kuraippu in the ragas Revati and Nayaki were reverted well by Vittal Rangan's violin.

The concert ended with *Nenjukku neediyum*, by Subramania Bharati in Sindhubhairavi, followed by a Sangam poem and a Ramayana chindu, based on the story of a bard predicting Sita's marriage.

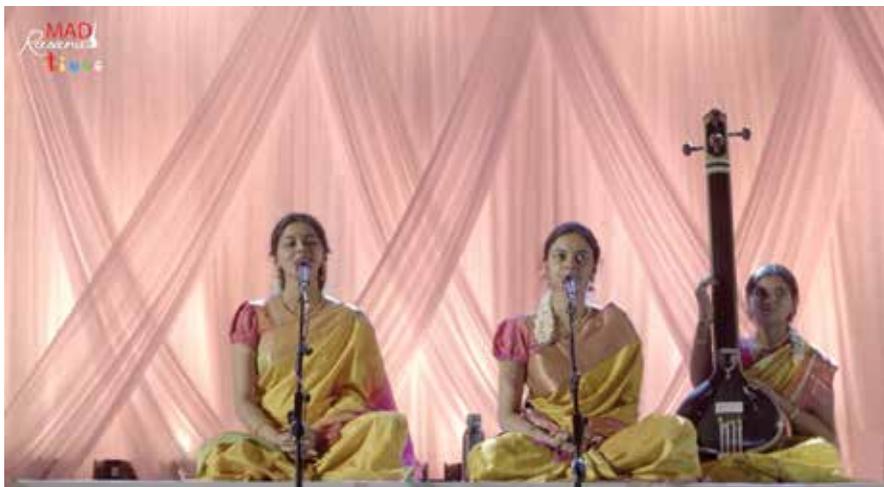
YELLOW – FOR LIGHT

Anahita and Apoorva were assigned the colour yellow for their concert. Exploring various dimensions of this colour with their co-artists B. Ananthakrishnan (violin) and N.C. Bharadwaj (mridangam), the duo did full justice to the concert.

The presentation began with a short alapana in raga Lalita followed by *Hiranmayeem Lakshmeem* composed by Muthuswami Dikshitar. The next piece, in raga Surati (*Haridra kumkuma priye*, composed by Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavata), brought in the reference of the yellow dye, 'haridra' (turmeric) in the pallavi. The pair excelled in the niraval and swara in this song, with the violinist playing back every note.

The piece de resistance, the dwi-raga ragam-tanam-pallavi, began after *Kanakasaila* (in Punnavarali

Anahita and Apoorva



preluded by the *Mooka Panchasati stuti*) and *Vallarisamane* (in raga Malavi, composed by Oothukadu Venkatasubba Iyer).

Set in the ragas Soorya and Sooryakantam, the pallavi was composed with the reference of the unusual turmeric abhishekam of the presiding deity. The sisters alternated between themselves in the alapana, and fluidly continued with the tanam. The ragas Hemavati, Hatakambari and Kanakangi (each raga having a reference to 'gold') were incorporated in the tanam. The pallavi itself, set in two extremely different ragas and misra jati Matya tala (Tisra nadai) was delivered exquisitely by the sisters. The concert concluded with a Jayadeva ashtapadi in Madhuvanti raga.

The choice of ragas in the ragam-tanam-pallavi was purely by chance. When it came to the pallavi portion, we related to the sun as one of the highlights of yellow and hence thought of Soorya and Sooryakantam almost at the same time! It felt great to think on similar lines, and we thought, why not do both. So the dwi-raga pallavi was one of our spontaneous and most satisfying matches as it is always such a wonderful feeling to vibe with each other in this way.

–ANAHITA & APOORVA

Sruti
INDIA'S PREMIER MAGAZINE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Sruti
Introduces
E Book

DOWNLOAD OUR
E Books ON
M.L. VASANTHAKUMARI

LOG ONTO
www.sruti.com
AND click ON E Books

E-BOOK EDITION
M.L. Vasanthakumari

E - Issue 3
June 2011



M.L. Vasanthakumari
(1928 - 1990)

The Sruti Foundation
9 Cathedral Road
Chennai 600 086
Ph: 2812 8070

Email: sruti.magazine@gmail.com