

THE HINDU

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Speed, the overriding mantra



Chitravina Ravikiran, Sreevalsan J. Menon and Sikkil Gurucharan. Photos: S. R. Raghunathan, K.V. Srinivasan and S. Thanthoni





The Music
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The highlight of **Chitravina Ravikiran's** concert was the detailed Ragam-Tanam-Pallavi in Kiravani. The raga detailing was done fairly in an exhaustive manner covering the raga image to paint the best picture. Kiravani's pensive tone has innate charm. Though melody is the watchword of Ravikiran's playing, the melkala sancharas were surprisingly a tad pompous. Violinist Mysore M. Manjunath substantiated it in his version with smooth and passionate touches.

The tanam was in full form with a pallavi set to tisra tripata duvi nadai (lyrics were not sung, which was normally done by Ravikiran). The ragamalika blend was confined to Valaji, Hindolam and Kalyanavasantham. It was followed by thani by Tiruvarur Vaidyanathan (mridangam), E.M. Subramaniam (ghatam) and G. Guruprasanna (ganjira).

The concert started with 'Varana Mukhava' in Hamsadhwani with a volley of swaras and this style of swara rains surfaced later in 'Paraloka Bhaya' in Mandhari. Melodic Lalitha essay formed the prelude to the soft and sedate playing of 'Nannu Brovu Lalitha' of Syama Sastri. An impressive and vibrant Shanmukhapriya foreword was attached for Annamacharya's 'Parama Purusha'. Here too there was a supplement of fast rolling swaras on the charanam, which as expected drew a huge applause. There was 'Sriramam Ravi Kulapathi Somam' in Narayanagowla of Dikshitar, a slow and soft kriti to calm the senses.

It is sad that most of the time, the artists go overboard on the swara section to elicit applause from the audience. This onus becomes stronger on the instrumentalists. Further, it would have been better if the instrumental players had announced the details of the compositions they played. It would not squelch the musical wisdom of the audience in anyway.

Sreevalsan J. Menon is blessed with a malleable masculine voice. It sounds pleasing, soft and deep in all octaves. There are no artifices or countertenor; Perfect open-mouthed and open-hearted articulation. That is his **music**.

After the customary varnam, 'Brova Barama' in Bahudari (Tyagaraja) ushered the proceedings further with a crisp niraval and swaras on 'Karunakara Sri Vasudeva.' A brief Arabhi was appended with 'Sri Saraswathi' (Dikshitar) and an array of swaras titivated. 'Teliyaleru Rama' in Dhenuka (Tyagaraja) and 'Janani Ninuvina' in Ritigowla (Subbaraya Sastri) infused a sense of majesty and devotion.

The Varali raga essay was carefully structured with special touches on the salient features of the raga. The reason being obvious as the kriti here was Tyagaraja's Pancharatnam 'Kana Kana Ruchira,' moving only on sahityam eschewing the swara passages. Here Sreevalsan had chosen the 'Rama Nama Rasikudu' for improvisation and swarakalpana. After the initial rounds of swaras, it gathered momentum with panchamam as the landing note.

The tani avaratanam by R. Ramesh (mridangam) and Bangalore N. Amrit (ganjira) breathed fire and