

MUSIC

Call of the Titans



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Chitravina Ravikiran's brilliance was well-matched by M. Chandrasekaran's expertise.

If Chitravina Ravikiran's concert at the Music Academy was a grand success, major credit should go to the rapport between the main artist and the principal accompanist, M. Chandrasekaran. While the veteran violinist expressed his appreciation of Ravikiran's playing with incessant *sabash* and *bale bale*, the chitravina expert on his part, dedicated 'Chandrasekara Pahimam' to the violinist.

Though the central piece of the concert was Ritigowla, the most interesting composition was in Kannada Maruva, a rare raga, which was given an elaborate treatment. A derivative of Kalyani, this raga closely resembles the mother raga from panchamam upwards, but below the 'pa', it is practically Amrutavarshini. Kannada Maruva therefore is half Amrutavarshini and half Kalyani, both on the ascent and the descent. It sounds beautiful. After a detailed alapana, Ravikiran took up Oothukadu Venkatasubbaiyar's Sanskrit composition, 'Vande Nanda Soonum', which is perhaps the only available composition in the raga. Chandrasekaran, who said that he had not heard the raga before, played impeccably. The genius of both the artists came through in this piece.

The Ritigowla alapana was marked by long, slow phrases, perhaps underscoring the advantage of the fretless chitravina. Here, Chandrasekaran's raga essay was markedly different from Ravikiran's, the violin featuring one long, pause-less phrase.

Subbaraya Sastri's 'Janani Ninnuvina' that appeared in due course was well-cued by the alapana. When it came to the kalpanaswaras, Ravikiran chose to append the notes to the last line of the chittaiswaram – sa ni da pa ma ga ri sa – rather than a word in the song. The effect was good.

Simhendra Madhyamam came as the first part of the RTP. In the tanam, Ravikiran chose to break into a ragamalika. He switched to Nilambari but requested the violinist to play another raga of his choice. Chandrasekaran chose Dhanyasi,

following which Ravikiran presented a Kedaragowla. After a word of praise for the Kedaragowla, Chandrasekaran said he would like to play the same raga and brought forth a delectable tanam.

The pallavi was the only disappointment of the concert.

When an artist begins an RTP, he raises expectations of elaborate niravals, tala exercises and multi-raga swaras. The tala exercises or multi-raga swaras were part of the tanam while niraval was hardly noticeable.

If shortage of time was the reason, Ravikiran could have presented a composition instead.

Patri Satishkumar, who has apparently modelled his style after vidwan Umayalpuram Sivaram, played superbly, as did Bangalore Amrit (ganjira).

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