Singing strings

OCCASION The raga delineations by Prof. T.N. Krishnan were soulful and Abhishek Lahiri’s was brilliant.

B. RAMADEVI

Any performing artist would love the ambience at ‘Yaksha,’ the music and dance fest, organised by Isha Yoga Centre at the Vellangiri foothills, Coimbatore. Since 2010, this week-long festival held just before Sivaratri, has featured eminent musicians and dancers.

The stage was set just in front of Goddess Linga Bhairavi’s temple, facing the three gigantic faces of Lord Siva. Innumerable oil lamps glittered away in the backdrop. An eager audience sat on mattresses in silence. No one got up in the middle and the phones never rang.

Lively and graceful

The festival began with the soulful violin of veteran Prof. T.N. Krishnan. Three of the four compositions he played were those of Saint Tyagaraja. He began with ‘Maakelaraa Vichaaramu’ in Ravichandrika. The amazing smoothness was soothing to the ears. Next came the soulful kriti in Saramathi, ‘Mokshamu Galada.’ A lively and graceful Kalyani danced forth in nimble steps through his aged, experienced fingers and he presented ‘Nidhi Chaa-la.’ The softly devout ‘Jagad-dharana’ that is usually included in the lighter session became the centre piece with an elaborate alapana of Kapi and the tanam. Thirissur KMS Mani on the mridangam and Radhakrishnan on the ghatam enchanted the audience during their magical laya session. There was a smile on everyone’s face as the rasikas joined them, clapping in appreciation.

Blissful Hindustani

Young Abhishek Lahiri, son and disciple of Alok Lahiri, gave a brilliant performance on his sarod. In typical Hindustani style, he presented the raga ‘Yaman’ (Kalyani-in Carnatic) with Alap, Jod and Jhala, (a fully improvised version) followed by a vilambit and dhrut (slow and fast) ‘gat’ set to teental (16 beats). Abhishek’s mastery over the instrument and the magical tabla of Shubhankar Bannerjee made-listening a pure bliss that lasted over an hour. The sarod vidwan concluded with a bandish in Raga Charukesi.

After the musical feast, the utsava idol of Linga Bhairavi was taken out in a procession and the fire dance that followed it was a visual treat.