Spirited show by veterans

YAKSHA
Music filled the air as eminent musicians performed at the week-long Isha festival in Coimbatore.

T.K. GANAPATHY

Veteran karanj groomed exponent Channam Shyamrao's inaugural vocal recital at the Isha festival of music and dance, in front of the Lingamtharir shrine, with songs associated with our ancient lore, regaled the audience. His invocation to Goddess Shakti from Durga Saptashati in ragi Shyam Kalavyam in vilambit ektaal followed by a parayan on Lord Siva, 'Tum Ho Aadhun', was a soulful presentation in two speeds with byra and swaras.

Channam's rendition of 'Vatapagi Ganapatim' in Hamadambirani in perfect unity with the Raga Pasuram was followed by 'Dhara Jagdambal Bhumi'. In the same raga to show the difference between the two styles of music. Presenting a sample each of thuim, d defeating and shaila, the vocalist brought out the essence of the raga to Lord Krishna, Lord Krsna and Siva celebrating both, each in their own way, was a typical example of his mastery of the forms. The composer Prashanth Mira (tabla) and Vishwas (harmonium) accompanied the artist in the concert.

The immeasurable power and energy of Shubha Mudgal's voice, with her strong spirited identity, was evident in her pulsating vocal recital. Comprising of a vilambit ektaal madad and ragi Yaman on Lord Siva, 'Tivra Deva Mahadeva', summing up the imposing Lord with his divine aspects of Jaya, damaru and the trident, her subsequent pleasing alankara and mohiniyogas followed by a vilambit tri saathi, Devi Dayaani Dauri, ended surprisingly without the usual sargams. Clarity of diction marked the suavising bhajans - 'Main Gulum Majhe Bich Gusa' in thumri and 'Ab Kaiser Cheelo Hai Banu Ladi' in Khamt in javai. Her tribute to the goddess of Maha Kali 'Maha Shiva Ratri' was spellbinding.

The artist's soul presentation of 'Adhaya Sita Rama' by the bandra was followed by how music had been a shaping force in her life. Her accompanists, Anooj Pradhan (tabla) and Prashant Pradhan (harmonium) were in perfect unison with the concert.

Elaborate rendition of 'Sudha Jat' by Vishwas Ravikiran (Chitravina) and Tarun Bhattacharya (Sitar) began with a brief prelude on the features of the instruments ittarin. Absolute control over the instruments by the virtuosos revealed their diligent sandhiham. Accompanied by Subhas Saha on the violin, Tins Shanksa on the mandranga and Abhishek on the tabla, Vishwas, as his work, created a perfect rhythm in the music buffs an inimitable music journey. Their opening with a specially composed RTT was handled with a clear perspective. The musicians with each other to bring out the nuances of the ragas sequentially, the pune benni 'Paratapura, Maheswar, Janpura Sadash Pandham' in Khanda jati. The exquisite raga vijnampuri by Sivaprakasam followed by Tarun with equal perfection. Their perfect fast tempo with all the riddles, rich in bhava was enthralling. Transforming the octaves with ease and perfection, their fast pace and sangais invoked the exercise with sheer melody throughout. 'Vatapagi Ganapatim' (Hamadambirani), played with gusto, ended their session. Subhash Saha provided colourful responses on the violin from the start. The vibrant raga of Shanksa (Mrindangam) and Abhishek (tabla) was well within the comfort zone throughout the concert.

Creativity based on melody marked the outstanding violin duet of Suhasanakan and Suvranjan. Sythes of sahaja feeling and a clear vision of the rakti content of music made their exposition of the ragas highly sensitive. Falling off with the popular Aala krishi 'Vatapagi Ganapatim' in Hamadambirani, the alapan brought alive the elegance of the raga and the bewitching inherent melody. The virtuosos and the clip off the old block - Abhiraman - excellen in the nirail and stream of swaras compelling audience attention.

After a brief outline of Kshushayapriya, the krishi 'Siva, Siva, Siva' was presented with stately and tonal subtleties. Raga Kraupi was handled by the duo sharing the alap and swaras with distinction for the composition, 'Kushalamudra Kannada'. The mellifluous strains of Sudha Prabhu and Chandranarayan, during the in-trikta swarodharana, with light and weighty phrases in the alapan section was the epitome of dignified and qualitative presentation. The percussionists, D.S.R. Murthy (mridangam), Sudhansu (muksha) and Bishnupriyan (gajape) took advantage of the vigour of the artists during accompaniment and the tani avartanam, the nada variations, in particular.

Footloose in chintamani, exquisite manamohani characterised Neyveli Sankararaj's concert the following day. The opening 'Vatapagi Ganapatim' (Hamadambirani) with nirai and swaras showed his performance potential. The Purnavaipul and aravanis traversing through the higher octaves with skaras and crossing techniques spoke of his vividness. The feisty nirai for the krishi 'Ramamutham Shyama' brought forth the contours of the raga displaying his musical perception of a high order. The Dwad podam on Lord Siva was executing. A vibrant tilla in Darbari Kanada brought the curtain down on the recital. Sai's accompaniment on the violin was below par in the solo versions of the raga and swara forays. Prasad, Ramani and Krishnan played superbly throughout with a delightful silky touch.

The grand finale of the week-long Isha festival of music and dance was the vibrant performance of the suro recital of the sixty generation artist of the Bangash line, Pt. Amjad Ali Khan in the company of Fazlur Rahman Gani (pakhawaj) and Pt. Tanmoy Bose (flute). Prefecting his programme with the statement that music unites people and varied cultures of the world, his devotion towards sages and revered cultures of the world, his devotion towards the Sadasiva in the opening piece in vilambit ektaal. His rendition was a combination of the most popular ragas. 'Chandrashtakam' set to a vibrant 14 beat cycle, Deep Chali. His inimitable improvisations played with varying rhythmic movements in the devotional numbers; 'Sharabani' and 'Flamenco', 'Raghuva Baja Rasi' were pleasing to the ear.

The drupad with the ensuing thumai and dasta in the 16 beat jhap, Pt. Shridhar Kalyan followed by Yaman in teen tal was spellbinding. Another melody in Kafi and 'Dardab' showcased his talent. Tate's composition, a folk song of Bengal, 'Tk La Chhala' - 'Keep walking alone' was a spirited version. The percussionists were inspired by the artist to present a lively thumai.

With devotional fervour

SIVARATRI

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Grand feast

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A live performance of music and bhajans, drum and dance by the devotees was a delight.

SPECTACULAR: (Clockwise from top left) Kaivalya Kher; Vasanthik Dagar; the Colonial Cousins; a troupe of drummers and Isha. PHOTO: K. ANANTHAN

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