

Connoisseur's delight

T.K. Ganapathy SEPTEMBER 17, 2010 00:00 IST

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Aesthetic: (From left): Seshadri Iyengar, Bharat Sundar and Sikkil Gurucharan. Photos: S. Siva Saravanan and K. Ananthan

Event The dance and music concerts by the artists at the September festival brought out their creativity and virtuosity. T.K. Ganapathy

S eshadri Iyengar's vibrant Bharatanatyam recital at the September festival of music and dance organised by Rajalakshmi Fine Arts, Coimbatore, was marked by exuberant leaps and jumps. A spirited artist, his opening number – invocation to the Lord of obstacles was impressive. The majestic offering of Mallari beginning with alarippu followed by Lalgudi varnam in Charukesi 'Innum En Manam Ariyadavar' was a clear version depicting the Lord's magic with explorations of nritta and abhinaya. His body language and movement of eyes in Tulsidas' bhajan depicting Rama winning the hand of Sita were emotive to bring out the devotional aspect. The Siva dance with Vishnu playing the drums for Him was the best segment.

Creative and aesthetic

Priyadarsini Govind's performance was an aesthetic delight. Her creative instincts came to the fore in her dance movements on the stage. Right from the opening depiction of the warrior and sringara qualities of Azhagu Nurugan, the rank beauty of her sculpted poses woven into jatis impelled the nod of the dance buffs.

The ragamalika number invoking the cosmic dancer, where the trikala jati repeated in three kalams and the other jatis twisting between tisram and kanda jati in 'Endan Swamiyai,' was impressive. The three abhinaya pieces based on Purananooru, where a mother grieves for her dead son in the battlefield and later the poignant expression on her face seeing the arrow on his chest beggared description of the depth of her bhava.

The concluding 'Vishamakkara Kannan' (Oothukkadu Venkatakavi) set in swara patterns followed by an Abhang was an effective portrayal of the mischievous quips and pranks of the cowherd of Brindavan with the members of the orchestra adding a sympathetic touch. Priyadarshini's adavus and pirouettes were exemplary. The orchestra included, Preethi Mahesh (vocal), Sikhamani (violin), Shaktivel Muruganandam (mridangam) and Balakrishnan (nattuvangam).

Bharat Sundar's vocal recital had all the ingredients of a lively and brisk kutcheri. His creativity matched by exceptional dynamism was evident even from the opening 'Jalajaksha' varnam in Hamsadhwani. His raga alapana of Gowrimanohari for the kriti, 'Gurulekhavanti' mapped the contours of the raga's beauty revealing his musical perception. His imposing structure of Ritigowla was built around sensitive core perceptive sancharas for the kriti, 'Ninnuvina.' Rahul's deft bowing on the violin struck a rapport with the vocalist's imaginative heights. Swaminathan's (mridangam) energetic patterns vibrated with refinement in the percussive wing. These junior artists are destined to go places.

The near-full auditorium of listeners who had gathered at the Mani High School for the music and dance fest, to listen to Bombay Jayashri was a pointer to her virtuosity as an artist. Her melodic mind, fluent voice and fertile manodharma shaped over years of intense sadhakam were on display that evening. 'Sree Varalakshmi' (Sriragam) as a starter was a smooth rippling flow of enchantment followed by 'Himagirikumari' in Thodi.

The alapana of Chandrajyoti for the kriti, 'Bagayanayya' with swaras emphasised its characteristic shades and nuances. She built up the edifice of the raga, Kharaharapriya with meticulous care and attention through madhyama and tara sthayis with an impeccable application of gananaya for the kriti, 'Chakkaniraja.' The ebb and flow of the rhythmic movement of her voice in the raga vinyasam of Mohanakalyani for the RTP the pallavi being, 'Aal Ilai Baalakanai' was a clear demonstration of her inspirational trait.

The renditions of 'Nadaloludai' (Kalyanavasantham) and 'Kanden, Kanden Seethaiyai' (Bagesri) were ecstatic. A lilting tillana in Misra Sivaranjani closed her musical agenda. Embar Kannan relished her music to heighten his solo versions of ragas to spur her imagination at every stage. The laya expertise of Manoj Siva (mridangam) and Sridhar (ghatam) enhanced the dignity of the concert.

The well-planned kutcheri of Sikkil Gurucharan to the accompaniment of Sreeramkumar (violin), Prasad (mridangam) and Purushothaman (ganjira) began on a buoyant note with a breezy Mandari varnam 'Vanajakshi' (Mysore Vasudevachar) followed by 'Tatvamariyatharama' (Ritigowla) with a

sprinkling of swaras. His leisurely exposition of Narayani for the kriti, 'Kannadantri' was spontaneous with a plenitude of sancharas and long karvais and the interpretation of the kriti brought out the radiance of the composition.

His raga delineation of Simhendramadhyamam for 'Ninne Nammithi Sree Rama' was a felicitous flow of striking prayogas softened by melodic graces adding a touch of class. The niraval and swaras were replete with the empathy required for the raga and tenor of the composition.

Focus on raga bhava

The joy-de-vivre of the concert was the RTP in Abheri for the Pallavi 'Sree Raghukulathilagudai Velachina Ramachandrude.' The raga unfolded with grandeur and coursed the three segments with full focus stressing the raga bhava and range. His raga sancharas of Vasantha, Kalyani, Bhairavi, Kalyanavasantham and the sangathis were simply superb.

Sreeramkumar's supportive role gave fillip to the vocalist's impulses and his solo exercises exuded charm to the recital. Prasad (mridangam) and Purushothaman (ganjira) embellished the compositions and swaras with right touches of exuberance and subtlety.

Sanjay Subramanian's brilliant exposition of ragas takes the listeners to dizzy heights. His blissful rhapsodic alapanas of Pantuvarali, Mohanam and Bagesri were carefully built up and power-packed with raga bhava despite his tonal outbursts. His exercises demonstrated his passion for the raga he handles. The sprightly execution of Nilambari varnam with gay abandon 'Neevanti Deivame' with chittaswaras settled him for Pantuvarali alapana after a brisk delivery of 'Ragaratnamalika' in Ritigowla. The sangatis and karvais in the Pantuvarali alapana were an uninterrupted flow from a perennial aesthetic spring for the composition, 'Kalyanagopalam.'

A very rare swarakshara swarajati of Mayuram Viswanatha Sastri 'Saarasadalananayanane' was a delectable presentation. His elaborate enunciation of Mohanam was a striking example of his ingenuity in digging nuggets one after the other to bring out the rakti of the raga for the kriti 'Kapali.' His Bagesri raga vinyasam for the RTP gave him ample scope to display an array of sangatis and kalpanaswaras for the pallavi 'Ninnaiye Rathiyenru Ninaikkirenadi.'

Varadarajan's brilliant accompaniment on the violin was substantial in his spontaneous responses to the vocalist's posers as well as solo versions of the ragas.

The combination of Patri Satish Kumar (mridangam) and Gopalakrishnan (ganjira) in the percussion wing to provide an integrated subtle to medium and refined karvais in their 25-minute thani haunted the listeners for long.