

Aesthetic Kharapriya

VOCAL The raga unfolded with all its charm.

G. SWAMINATHAN

Rarely does a concert begin with a Pancharatna kriti. Prarthana Rao started her recital for Thyagaraja Seva Samithi in Obul Reddy Hall, Vanimahal, with the Gowla Pancharatnam 'Dudala', where Tyagaraja recites for the innumerable misdeeds he had done. The audio system that played truant caused a break as the artists stopped for the system to gain some balance.

But the intrusion did not prevent Prarthana, endowed with a voice ideal for Carnatic music — neither too high pitched nor too low — from presenting a good fare.

Scheduled on Bagula Panchami day, the programme was in fact all-Tyagaraja. A quick round of swaras in Kannda for 'Ide bhagyamu' preceded the fully energetic 'Sobillu saphaswara' (Jaganmohini.) In fact,

Prarthana essayed three ragas that evening — Begada ('Nee pada pankaja'), Pantuvarali ('Raghuvarannanu') and Kharaharapriya ('Rama nee samana mevaru'). Perhaps Prarthana saved her creativity and energy for the main Kharaharapriya. Begada and Pantuvarali, therefore were a little terse and sketchy.

Kharaharapriya was aesthetically structured with



IDEAL VOICE: P. Prarthana Rao. PHOTO: S.S. KUMAR

grammatical accuracy. Prarthana's choice of long and short phrases coalesced well with the musical charm of the raga.

Rendered with care

The composition was also rendered with care and her selectively poised niraval and kalpanaswaras at 'Paluku paluku' highlighted the raga's beauty. Rao's swara sections were parsimonious; however, here she was quite indulgent and centred her various permutations landing on 'panchamam.'

The fast paced 'Sarasa samadana' (Kapinarayani)

and 'Vara ragalaya' (Chenjukhambodi) sandwiched the slow and sober 'Entaninne' in Mukhari. Prarthana Rao's musical equipment needs to be honed with special attention in the area of internalised articulation. Still, one could feel the emotions surging through 'Entaninne' and 'Rama nee samana'.

Usha Rajagopalan on the violin escorted the young singer with extra care in the raga expositions and her swaraprastharas with Thanajavur Kumar's rhythmic contribution blended well with the overall picture.

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All tempo and dexterity

THE PERFORMANCE of Ranjani and Gayatri for Nadopasana was an emphatic declaration of the profundity of their professional competence adhering to the letter present day cutcheri pantha of tempo and vocal dexterity. In raga alapanas, Ranjani served as a launching pad for Gayatri to carry the payload of brigas to the top octave, a specialist in tara shayi scanning. The first such essay was Durbar shared between the sisters. They roved over the raga in rapid pace. Charumathi Raghuram, the violin accompanist young in age but mature in musical mind, presented Durbar appealing in substance and poetic grace. The phrases were composed with classical simplicity and directness of expression, rich and at the same time without any superfluous ornamentation. The exposition reaching cultivated excellence erased the earlier raga impression by the vocalists. The kirtana was "Ramaabhira-ma" rendered with disciplined precision.

The other two raga alapanas were Subhapanthavarali and Sankarabharanam. The former with the song, "Sri Satyanarayanam" was decent and decorous. The main raga, Sankarabhara-

nam, was left for Gayatri to provide penetrating passion in tara shayi. While with the sisters the vision was expansiveness, Charumathi's was exquisiteness. The kirtana, "Sarojadala Nethri" was well aired. The recital provided the two dimensions of music — the tonal manipulative charm of the vocalists and the violinist's aesthetic elegance and poise. Neyveli Narayanan, on the mridangam, with K. V. Gopalakrishnan (kanjira) saw to it that the tempo of the songs was kept at top level.

Rooted in sampradaya

Prarthana Rao gave a concert for the Rasika Ranjani Sabha rooted in the sampradaya pattern. It looked as if she considered modern trends in music beneath her notice.

Such was the image she presented while rendering the songs, "Jaya Jaya Swamin," the Nattai Pancharatna, "Jaga Daa Nanda Kaaraka" and "Pahi Jagad Janani" (Vachaspati). She elaborated Hindolam ("Ramanukku Mannan" — Arunachala Kavi song) and Vachaspati on traditional lines. S. P. Anantapadmanabhan understandingly lent violin support. S. R. Ethirajan (mridangam) kept the laya wing. — SVK]

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LEISURE LISTINGS

Her teacher's style

IN the field of classical performing arts, the guru has a prominent role in shaping the intuition and approach of the disciple to effectively blossom into a matured artiste.

Hearing vocalist Prarthana Rao at Asthika Samajam, Venus Colony, in the Ramanavami series, we were taken back to the nostalgic days of her guru vocalist Mani

Krishnaswamy, where she impressed the audience by her earnest search for intrinsic excellence, with her style of vocal artistry distinct of the school to which the artist belongs. Of course, the tempo in this music concert was a matter of judgmental appreciation.

Beginning with *Rama Bhakthi Samarajya* in raga Sudda Bangala of Thyagaraja, when she traversed through *Brocheva Evarura* of Vasudeva Chariar in raga Khamas, delivering and carrying the essence of the raga swaroopas, her matured approach came to the fore. In the Lathangi raga alapana, which she took up next for elaborating *Kanda Judumi* of Thyagaraja, her voice assumed a fullness of ranga, lending ease and fluency to her concert. A detailed thodi alapana next, *Enduku Daya Rathura* of Thyagaraja, though satisfying in all respects, left an impression that her distinctive style, reflecting Mani Krishnaswamy's school of music, will have to be brought out expressing her intuitive perceptions. And this alone can lend more quality to her music.

She was supported by Hemamalini (violin) and Thiruvaidaimaruthur Sankaran (mridangam).

— Narayana Vishwanath

