

Date:06/06/2008 URL:

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Veteran remembered – Sunaadha Vinodhan

V. BALASUBRAMANIAN

The birth anniversary of Thanjavur S. Kalyanaraman organised by Shanmukhapriya and SKR Trust, was a multi-dimensional event.

Photo: S.R.Ragunathan



Aural treat: Malladi Brothers.

The birth anniversary of Thanjavur S.Kalyanaraman was celebrated on June 2, under the auspices of Shanmukhapriya and Tanjore SKR Trust at Narada Gana Sabha. Following the mangala isai — nagaswaram recital by Seshampatti Sivalingam — Adi Shankara's Navaratnamalika Stotram was offered as invocation by the disciples of Kalyanaraman, to the accompaniment of an orchestra conducted by K.S.Ragunathan, popularly known as HMV Raghu.

An edited version of a documentary on the musician, running for about 20 minutes (the original is an 85-minute DVD) titled, 'Tanjore S. Kalyanaraman - The Sunaadha Vinodhan,' was screened. That it is another feather in the cap of S.B.Khanthan who has scripted and directed the film was evident from the loud applause he drew from the almost packed house.

Learning experience

Brinda Venkatraman, secretary, Shanmukhpriya, and disciple of SKR welcomed the gathering. Justice V. Ramasubramanian, High Court of Madras, in his presidential address highlighted the fact that SKR was not only a rasika's musician but also a musician's musician and a scientist among musicians.

Madurai T.N.Seshagopalan, the chief guest, said that every concert of SKR offered something new to learn and was pure in all aspects, such as sruti, laya and bhava. R. Krishnaswamy, secretary, Narada Gana Sabha, underlined the fact that SKR was a very simple but sensitive person and was always willing to co-operate with the sabhas. A constant innovator and diligent practitioner of Nadha Yogam, observed Dr.Va.Ve.Su., former Principal, Vivekananda College, while vidwan P.S.Narayanaswamy, a very close associate of Kalyanaraman, noted that the veteran diligently followed the rules of Carnatic music and believed that in music, hard work and long hours of practice will for sure, bring success. A CD of a 1974 concert of Kalyanaraman, and three other CDs rendered by his disciples Bhushany Kalyanaraman, Subbalakshmi Swaminathan and Mathangi Mohandass were released on the occasion. In recognition of his over 50-year service to music and the music industry, HMV Raghu was honoured with a citation.

Bhushany Kalyanaraman, founder trustee, Tanjore SKR Trust, proposed a vote of thanks and Murali Iyer anchored the proceedings. It was followed by a vocal recital by Malladi Brothers.

Fitting tribute

Malladi Brothers' 'Tygaraja Palayasu Mam' (Gowlai-Adi-Dikshitar) that was replete with swara passages drawn on the lines of the pancharatna, set the tone for the fare they were to offer that evening. Ravi Kumar's essay of Devagandhari was an aural treat and V. Sanjeev's reply was equally competent. 'Karunasamudhra Nanu' (Adi-Tyagaraja) was the kriti. 'Neevera Kula Dhanamu' (Begada-Chapu-Tyagaraja) that came next was pleasant, what with their impeccable pronunciation!

The detailed sketch of vivadhi ragam Nasikabhushani was a fitting tribute to SKR who was adept at vivadhi ragams too. Ravi Kumar was at ease traversing smoothly through all the three octaves, sruti intact, while Sanjeev, a product of the Kanyakumari school was in fine fettle. Special mention must be made of his passionate handling of the vivadhi.

The 9 p.m. blues , typical of Chennai rasikas, caused a depletion in the number present. When one was just expecting the tani for the kriti, 'Sri Rama Saraswati' (Adi-Dikshitar), the brothers followed it up with a very rare Tyagaraja piece, 'Virajathuraga' (Balahamsa-Adi).

At the stroke of 9.30 came the main raga Kharaharapriya. The interpretation was very brisk with Sriram Prasad wielding the baton this time. 'Rama Nee Samanamevaru' (Rupakam - Tyagaraja) was a cakewalk.

The stage was full of positive energy thanks to the presence of Tiruvarur Bhaktavatsalam (mridangam) and with S.Karthik's (ghatam) support it was even more vibrant.

Apart from embellishment of the kritis with crafty artistry, their exchanges in the tani particularly in the chatusra tisra nadai was captivating.

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