



Hyderabad Brothers. PHOTO: V. GANESAN

Bhava was missing

There was something lacking in the overall effect of the Hyderabad Brothers.

G. SWAMINATHAN



Prima facie, they have strong voice and demonstrate good training and tradition. They have been in the field for quite long and sing with conviction. They choose the right kritis. Keeping abreast with the trend, they select some atypical raga for RTP. They keep the tempo of the kutcheri in a buoyant mood. Yet, there is something lacking in the overall effect of the Hyderabad Brothers. Probably that 'something' is that invisible magnetic maze the musicians weave to envelope the audience through their aesthetics.

All the aspects of arguments mentioned above are true. But what Raghavachari and Seshachari lack is the finesse in delivery. A loud presentation cannot be misconstrued as an open mouthed articulation. Assertive advances on raga vinyasa or swara prasthara alone may not impress the audience. A hard hitting deliverance sans bhava will not be a substitute for the smooth flow of the concert.

In this particular concert, Raghavachari was almost like a weak vocal prop except that he participated in the raga treatise of Ramapriya ('Korinavara') a bit and in the swara segments. Otherwise, it was the concert of Seshachari. The voice of Seshachari is the one which is strong and flexible too. The main raga Bhairavi and 'Balagopala' of Dikshitar was rendered with commendable reverence including the customary 'Neela Neerada Saareera' for extension and swara segment. It was awkward to see Raghavachari repeating the same swaras in the same order as rendered by Seshachari. Hamsavinodini, a melody with a strong Hindustani flavour, was dealt with in two parts by Seshachari. The brisk tanam and pallavi in Adi talam 'Nigama sudha vinodini neeraja dala lochani sada' failed to evoke any interest. A ragamalika swaras once again initiated and followed by Seshachari in Ranjani, Neelambari etc.

S. Varadarajan on the violin grasped all the good phrases and added substance to it with his own contribution in ragas as well as swaras. MLN Raju and N Somayajulu came with bright patches of rhythm and also offered a typical tani avartanam. A vivacious 'Manasu nilba' in Abogi and a pale 'Braraptha' in Swaravali and a dull 'Triloka matha' in Paras served as fillers.

Sincere raga elaborations

Kharaharapriya, Ananda Bhairavi, Kalyani... the young artists showed manodharma.

CHARUKESI



Swarna Rethas is already in the list of 'young-brigade-to be-watched.' He has a nice voice and sings with clarity. Swarna Rethas began with a Begada varnam, 'Intha Chaala Chesithe.' Tyagaraja's 'Paraloka Sadhaname' in Purvikalyani with brisk swarakalpana followed and he presented the appropriate song 'Angaraham Aasryami' by Muthuswamy Dikshitar, in Suratti, the day being Tuesday. The two Tamizh songs he sang were 'Kaana Kan Ayiram Vendum' by Anai Ayya in Neelambari and Gopalakrishna Bharati's 'Mukti Alikkum Thiru' in the raga Navroz. While the former was noted for sobriety, the latter was an evocative piece and Swarna Rethas presented both equally well.

The major raga for the day was Kharaharapriya. An excellent alapana that was full of emotion added with creative passages resulted in sowkhyam or listening pleasure. The violinist S. Karthik matched him truly in his alapana exposition. Swarna Rethas, happy with the outcome, began 'Pakkala Nilabadi,' the kriti of Tyagaraja. His swarakalpana portion was not long but his niraval of 'Manasoon' was marked for his imagination. (Rethas was heard pronouncing 'nilapadi' and 'nilabadi' alternately. He should choose the right one and stick to it!)

The accompanists S. Karthik on the violin and Umayalpuram Kalyanaraman on the mridangam helped to enhance the quality of the kutcheri.

Jayashri Aravind, the vainika, began her concert in Nattai Varnam and picked up Muthuswamy Dikshitar's Gowla kriti, 'Sri-mahaganapathy Ravathumam' next. Her gamakas were simple and the 'nadham' of the strings were easy on the ear. Her rendering of Tyagaraja's 'Teliyaleru Rama' (Dhenuka) was evocative.

Jayashri's alapana for Ananda Bhairavi showed her excellent manodharma and her presentation of 'O Jagadamba' by Syama Sastri revealed both piety and passion. The niraval was brief, but adequate. The charm of Kalyani with its magnificent touches lent her alapana the right mood. Jayashri took up Muthu-



PROMISING: (from top left clockwise) Swarna Rethas, Kunnakudi Balamuralikrishna, Padma Sugavanam and Jayashri Aravind. PHOTOS: V. GANESAN

samy Dikshitar's 'Bhajare Rechita' and her rendition of niraval and swaras for the kriti was notable for their brevity. In fact, Jayashri does not play lengthy alapanas or niravals. Perhaps that is her style of play in order to play more kirtanas. 'Ra Rama Intidaga' a kriti of Tyagaraja (Asaveri) preceded the Ragam-Tanam-Pallavi in Kharaharapriya. The veena artiste sang the pallavi lines - 'Maalmarugane Murugane Guhane Aarumugane' - for the benefit of the audience. There was a 15-minute play of tani by Trivandrum R. Vadiyanathan on mridangam and Udupi Balakrishnan on ghatam who provided excellent percussion support. Yet, Jayashri had more than ten minutes and she joyously played 'Karunai Deivame Karpagame' in Sindubhairavi and 'Karpagame Kan Paarai' in Madyamavati with a Swati Tirunal Tillana before concluding her recital.

Padma Sugavanam took up Kalyani raga as her major item for a detailed alapana with niraval and swaras in right measure, for the Tyagaraja kriti 'Enthugo Nee Manasu.' While the alapana revealed her manodharma to an extent, her niraval duly complimented her effort to give her rendition a wholesome picture of the composition. Padma's concert schedule opened with a Thodi varnam, 'Eranapai.' Initially, when she began 'Manasu karuga' in Hamsadhvani, it looked as though she was a little unsteady but she managed to overcome it with Papanasam Sivana's Varali kriti 'Ka Va Va.'

Padma did a brief alapana in

Ritigowla for the kriti 'Ragaratna Malikache' of Tyagaraja, and her niraval from the charanam line 'Bhagavadotamulu' gave her enough opportunity to exhibit her imagination. The next was 'Paramapurusham' in raga Lalita Panjamam, a not-so-often heard song of Swati Tirunal. Leaving Rajna Swaminathan to showcase her 'Thani,' Padma ended her recital with 'Theruvil Vaarano?' the Khamas composition of Muthuthandavar.

Padma Sugavanam had K.P. Nandini for violin support and her rendering of both Kalyani and Ritigowla was precise and showed her creativity in raga expositions. Rajna Swaminathan, was competent throughout and played with anticipation in her mridangam accompaniment.

Kunnakudi Balamuralikrishna has carved a niche for himself in the competitive Carnatic music field. He has an excellent voice that traverses in all the three octaves, lower, middle and upper effortlessly. He is perhaps one of the young musicians who has vidwat, voice and talent in good measure, which he carefully employs in his renditions, be it alapana or kriti-rendering or swarakalpana. His style of singing is devoid of exhibitionistic tendencies. Nevertheless, when he sings he draws the complete attention of the listener.

Balamurali sang Patnam Subramania Iyer's Navaragamalikai Varnam 'Valachi Valachi' before paying obeisance through Muthuswamy Dikshitar's Begada raga kriti 'Vallabha Nayagasya.' He sang an Asaveri piece

'Lekana Ninnu Jutukonnu' before he launched the elaborate Vachaspati raga alapana. It was exhaustive and the swarupa of the raga was presented in all its magnificence, where Balamurali had to employ all his manodharma skills. The violinist, Ambika Prasad presented an equally brilliant version. Tyagaraja's 'Kanta Jutumi' was the kriti that the singer took up after alapana. The swara-segment also showed the creativity of the vocalist and his bout with the violinist here was interesting.

In Ritigowla, Balamurali modulated his voice to bring the best karvai prayogas and the kriti 'Sitanayaka' another Tyagaraja composition, was well rendered. Arunachala Kavi's 'Vandhan Vandhan Bharatha' in Mohanam, the only Tamizh song, preceded the Ragam-Tanam Pallavi in Saveri. The Saveri alapana had to be brief to fit into the timeframe, yet it showed his sincerity. Balamuralikrishna sang a breezy padam, 'Samyamidhe Ra Ra Sami,' to end his concert. There is maturity in packaging and presenting his concert and that makes his recital a comprehensive affair.

If Ambika Prasad was at his best in violin accompaniment throughout, the success of the concert was in no small measure due to the excellent mridangam support by Konerirajapuram V. Varadarajan. He closely followed the vocalist's kriti renditions and played a memorable 'Thani.' His filling touches during the pauses, when necessary, was another noteworthy aspect of his support.