

Magical afternoon with Sudha Raghunathan

Carnatic Vocal Concert (May 6, 2018)

A Review by Sunandha Krishnagopal

The audience at the Hindu temple of Delaware were treated to a memorable concert by Smt. Sudha Raghunathan ably supported by Kamalakaran Vinjamuri on the violin, Rajna Swaminathan on the mridangam, Soumiya Narayan on the ghatam and Kartik Venkataraman on the kanjira.

The concert began with the artist's rendition of the popular Navaragamalika varnam which was embellished with a smattering of kalpana swarams at the end in Sriragam. Following this was "Shobillu Saptaswara", a kriti on Nadopasana or worship through music. Interestingly, this song is set to ragam Jaganmohini which literally translates into "the enchantress of the world". The artist displayed her prowess through breathtaking niraval in the line "Dhara ruksa maadulalo". A brisk rendition of the Papanasam Sivan song "Nee irangayenil pugazh" in ragam Atana was next.



L to R: Rajna Swaminathan, Kartik Venkataraman, Sudha Raghunathan, Soumiya Narayan, Kamalakaran Vinjamuri

Then came "Janani ninnuvina" in ragam Reeti Gowlai. Smt. Sudha displayed her mastery over the raga with elaborate sangathis and gave the alapana a gradual detailed buildup. The simple yet soulful rendition added to the beauty of the song, entranced the audience, and left them wanting for more. Following this was the Tamil song "Arul Seiya Vendum" in raga Rasika Priya which was then followed by the Purandaradasa song "Rama Rama Rama Rama Yenniro Seetha". These two songs provided for a refreshing change in tempo and set the mood for the following keertanai.

The main song of the concert was "Etavunara" a prolific composition by Saint Tyagaraja in ragam Kalyani. Smt. Sudha Raghunathan showed us why she is considered one of the best in Carnatic music through her scintillating raga alapana, highlighting the finer nuances of this ragam. The raga was developed with masterly strokes and the grahabeda to Hindolam and Madhyamavati was a reflection of that. She was superbly supported by Kamala Kiran Vinjamuri on the violin during the alapana. The neravil followed by kalpana swaram on the line "Sri Garudaga" was full of gamaka oriented phrases with the usual laya

display. This was followed by Thani by Rajna Swaminathan on the mridangam, Sowmiya Narayan on the ghatam, Kartik Venkataraman on the kanjira. It was an elaborate Thani well appreciated by the audience. Following this was a short brilliant rendition of RTP in the following ragas Nata Bhairavi, Bhairavi, Ahir Bhairavi, Saalaka Bhairavi, and lastly Sindhu Bhairavi. A special mention of the violin by Kamalakiran Vinjamuri for the Tanam component should be made here.

The end of the concert consisted of her popular numbers “Bhagyada Lakshmi Bamma”, “Brahmam Okate”, “Kandal Mudalai”, and “Bho Shambo” which were delivered in quick succession. All in all, her concert was a truly enjoyable and satisfying experience. Music touches the soul, and her concert was a shining testimony of that. Her rendition, song choices, managed to please each and every section of the audience.

Sunandha Krishnagopal is a singer of music of different genres and resides in Downtown with her family.