Jayanthi Kumaresh
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By Rajee Padmanabhan

Veena concerts have become such a rarity these days that one tends to await them like a hornbill waiting for rains to come. This spring, Sruti audience's thirst for a Veena concert was quenched by an evening of eminently enjoyable music by Smt.Jayanthi Kumaresh.

Jayanthi started off with Muthiah Bhagavathar's sprightly *Daru Varnam* in *Khamach*, *Mate Malayadhwaja*. After a brief sketch of *Kamalamanohari*, the artist played Muthuswami Dikshitar's evergreen composition in this raga, *Kanchadalayathaakshi*. A nice round of *Kalpana Swarams* rounded out this piece.

Nannu Vidachi Kadalakura, Tyagaraja's gem in *Reethigowla* set to *Mishra Chappu*, was well rendered. Changing tempo, Jayanthi launched into the fast-paced *Gambhiravani* kriti, *Sadamadini*. *Ramachandram Bhavayami* in Vasantha followed. The kalpana swarams in this piece had a nice flow with interesting patterns.

Kalyani was taken up for elaboration. There were some delectable phrasings in the *alapana* bringing out the beauty of this majestic raga. *Bhaja re re Chitta*, a Dikshitar masterpiece was rendered with all the grandeur it deserves. Even though there was no *Niraval* in this item, the artist compensated with a full plate of *Kalpana swarams*, both slow and fast-paced. Sriram Brahmanandam on the Mridangam and Sriram Balasubramaniam on the Ghatam enlivened the swarams with their back and forth volleys with Jayanthi.

Soon after, the artist started Kapi alapana that one could perceive a strong influence of her Guru, the unparalleled Veena maestro, Sri. S. Balachander. The meditative quality, the vibrant *gamakams*, phrases traversing half an octave played on a single fret, plucks extended to the maximum – all bore the distinctive stamp of her Guru. Tanam was noteworthy for some of the fingering techniques used. Jayanthi brought out a nice effect by plucking on the first and third strings simultaneously along with the drone strings. The Pallavi in Khanda jati Triputa, with Samam eduppu, had the lyrics: *Arul Varamarul Tunai Purnidarul | Iyal Isai Enakku ||*

At the outset of the Pallavi, after demonstrating it vocally, the artist announced that there will be three stages in the piece, her improvisation (melodic) first, followed by improvisation on the percussion, followed by Trikalam. The Pallavi was executed very well. The Ragamalika swarms at the end included Bhowli, Mohanam and finally ending with Kapi. Both the Srirams played an enthusiastic Tani Avartanam at the conclusion of this piece. Sriram Balasubramanian, the ghatam artist of the evening, has recently moved into Delaware Valley and the Sruti audience looks forward to hearing a lot more from him.

The Yamunakalyani melody, Krishna nee Begane, was followed by a Tamil song in Desh. Lalgudi Jayaraman's tillana in Mishra Sivaranjani was the concluding piece.

Jayanthi is a foremost Vainika in the Carnatic Music world today and her vidwat was amply evident in the flawless execution and virtuosity at display in the concert. In the cozy confines of Calvary Vision Center, both the artistes as well the audience enjoyed an ambience akin to a chamber concert.

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