

## Devotion and melody balanced

**I**N SRI Thyagaraja's compositions, the devotional values enhance the melodic aesthetic sangita. If a musician can do justice to both — even to pay attention to the latter has become rare — he deserves to be worshipped by rasikas. Spirituality and lofty and ennobling musical concepts are inseparably united — Swara-raga-laya-sudha-Masamandu-Vara-Rama Namamane-Kanda-Chakera misramu-jesi — as he has defined in the Kapi song, "Inta Sowkhyamanine," and he has also thrown the challenge to musicians — "Sogasuga-mridangatalamu-jatagoorchi- ninu-sokkajeyadheerudevavado?"

These two precepts would reverberate in the minds of rasikas who understand the meaning of the saint's songs whenever they happen to attend an aradhana concert. Once a musician realises the primacy of devotion in the kirtanas the other musical values gain fulfilment in the interpretation in a performance.

The cutcheri by the sisters, Ranjani and Gayatri, for Sarvani Sangeetha Sabha celebrating Thyagaraja aradhana bound the listeners in the luxurious bondage of the saint composer's classicism. By the way they rendered the songs, it was obvious to the audience that they were quite at ease with the demanding features of Thyagaraja songs. The image of music's beauty, triumphant in sahitya and sangatis, was brought before the listeners with consummate confidence and competence. They displayed a pulsating approach to the interpretation of the kirtanas — "Nee Bhajanagana" (Nayaki) "Kanakanaruchira" (Varali Pancharatna) at the very start. They got engrossed in the delights of the pieces "Entarani" (Harikambhoji), "Isa Pahimam" (Kalyani) and "Koluvaivunnade" (Bhairavi) singing them emotively and they stamped on them depth, delicacy and dexterity.

"Anupamagunambudhi" (Atana) and "Nenarumchinanu" (Malavi) took

charge of the lilting part of the concert. The rendering of the kritis exposed the musical intensity of Ranjani and Gayatri. For the weight they gave to the Kalyani alapana they could have chosen a more solid kirtana.

The raga exposition of Harikambhoji by Gayatri and Kalyani by Ranjani, with flowing lines and delicate graces, throbbled with lyrical vibrations. There was warmth in the arrangement of the sancharas with subtle strands of phrasings adding charm to the vistas of the two ragas. The Bhairavi alapana shared by the sisters was forceful and aesthetically fluent. In style and idiom, the delineation method was traditionalist with a passion for music's basic values. The ragas shone with exquisite manodharma well coordinated with subtlety of articulation. They captured the facets of the beauty of the ragas with clever gana-laya usage.

The heightened standard of the performance rested equally on the contribution of the young violinist, Sanjeev and the mridangist, Manoj Siva, and the ghatam artiste, S. V. Viswanathan. Sanjeev expressed his talent and competence on the strings imparting elegant pleasantness to his solo versions of Harikambhoji, Kalyani and Bhairavi packed with sensitive sancharas. A rich radiant tone marked his playing style. Manoj Siva, in cooperation with Viswanathan, provided instinctive percussive rhythmic patterns, vibrant and meritorious.

— SVK