

Enchanting alapanas

If the concert by Bombay Ranjani and Gayathri at Hamsadhwani was gripping all the way it was due to the exquisite planning by the artistes. There were no musical excesses, nor unsavoury exhibitionism of vidwat. Alapanas were rendered only for those songs which were necessary. The comprehensive alapana in Purvikalyani by Ranjani and the rendering of Neelakanta Sivan's "Anandanatanamaduvār" by the duo made an indelible impact. The lilting chittai swaras rendered repeatedly in Periasamy Thooran's "Tayetripurasundari" (Suddha Saveri) gilded the kriti. Tyagaraja's "Ramaneeyada" had its full quota of swaras and neraval not to speak of an enchanting alapana by Gayatri whose phrases and idioms had caressing overtones.

The Bombay Sisters who began their concert with a rousing varnam in Durbar and followed up with Patnam Subramania Iyer's "Ninujoochi" (Sowrashtra) with lilting swaras at Pallavi, sang Tyagaraja's "Seethapathe" (Kamatch). The neraval and swaras at the charanam, "Premajoochi Naapai" were done most effectively, bringing out the poet's spiritual fervour "Kalalanerchina" (Deepakam) proved a perfect launch pad for the RTP in Shankarabharanam.

Shankarabharanam is a majestic raga. The sisters covered all the aspects in turns, in the alapana before starting the tanam in the traditional style. The pallavi line was a familiar one: "Mahima teliyatarama ramaramana nee..." The tala was tisra tripata. The neraval and the swaras continued to make the audience spellbound.

After such an intellectual exercise, an air of tranquillity came in the form of a devotional Arunagirinathar hymn (rendered as a ragamalika) and Sivan's "Sodanai cheyya" (Kapi). The spirit continued in a bhajan penned by Khalas in Lalith. Poochi Iyengar's Paras tillana was a "perfect ten" in a manner of speaking. Akkarai Subbalakshmi played with ease. The vocalists most sportingly acknowledged the youngster's neat answers either in alapanas, neravals or swaras.

Manoj Siva (mridangam) and B. S. Purushotham (khanjira) played their roles well.