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Melody through the frets

Charukesi



Quality fare: Vishal Sapuram. Photos: M. Karunakaran

Young talents from abroad regale the discerning rasikas of Chennai at this year's NRI music festival.

The chitravina player Vishal Sapuram is from Austin, Texas. He is pursuing his graduate studies in Sanskrit and Economics. The violinist Balu Raguraman is from U.K. Kiran Vangipuram, grandson of Vinjipuram Varadaraja Iyengar, and a student of psychology and chemistry is from Michigan, while the young ghatam player Subhang, who is in his Eleventh Grade, is from New Jersey. This quartet met only at their performance for Vishal's chitravina recital.

No doubt, Chennai's discerning rasikas welcome and encourage young talents from abroad. They, however, have to prove their mettle here. Balu Raguraman (violin) played like a seasoned vidwan and did not look like an occasional player in far off U.K. So mature was his play that if only he chooses to take it up as a profession, he will be one of the leading artists here. Vishal is just out of his teens, having learnt to play the chitravina from the maestro Ravikiran for the past fourteen years.

The fare they offered was a fairly standard one. With a Hamsadhwani varnam, Vishal began his concert and moved on to Muthuswami Dikshitar's 'Swaminatha Paripalayasumam' in Nattai. Vishal's touches were featherlike and they produced such an enchanting melody. He has his manodharma and it sure helps him to execute the alapanas imaginatively. The alapana of Simhendramadyamam was so thorough that it had all the bright aspects of the raga highlighted while he played along. The violin response by Balu Raguraman was equally brilliant. Vishal played 'Kamakshi Kamakotivasini' in Simhendramadhyamam (raga Sumadhyuthi according to Dikshitar). The niraval and swaraprasthara were chosen from the anupallavi lines 'Kaumari Kusumadhyuthi.' The swara sallies he exchanged with the violinist were competently handled by the latter.

Lilting melody

It was Tyagaraja's Supradeepa raga kriti 'Varasikhi Vahana' that preceded the expansive alapana of Mohanam. Vishal could produce the lilting melody in his own style and the violinist had enough time to present his imaginative version of the raga. Tyagaraja's kriti 'Nannupalimpa' served as the main item, in which he chose to dwell on short swarakalpna, providing opportunity for the young percussionists for thani. Both Kiran and Shubang excelled in

their respective rhythmic exercises.

Kiran, incidentally, is a disciple of Guruvayur Dorai, having learnt from mridangam vidwan Rajasekar in the beginning, should be watchful of his muthaipu sequence while the main performer completes the kriti. Shubhang is a student of T.H. Subhashchandran and his performance in Hamsadhwani this year is a maiden one.

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